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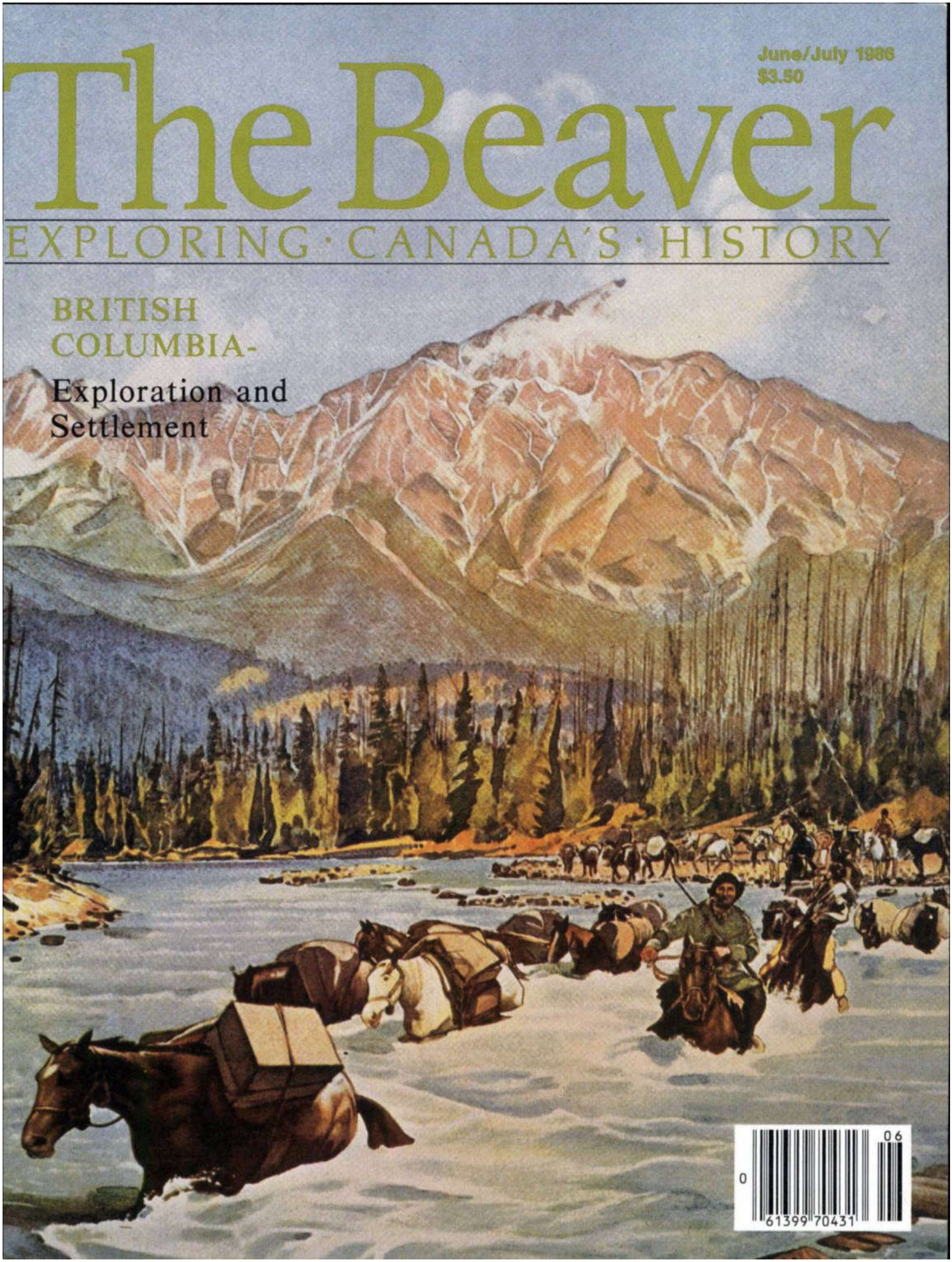
Exploration and Settlement



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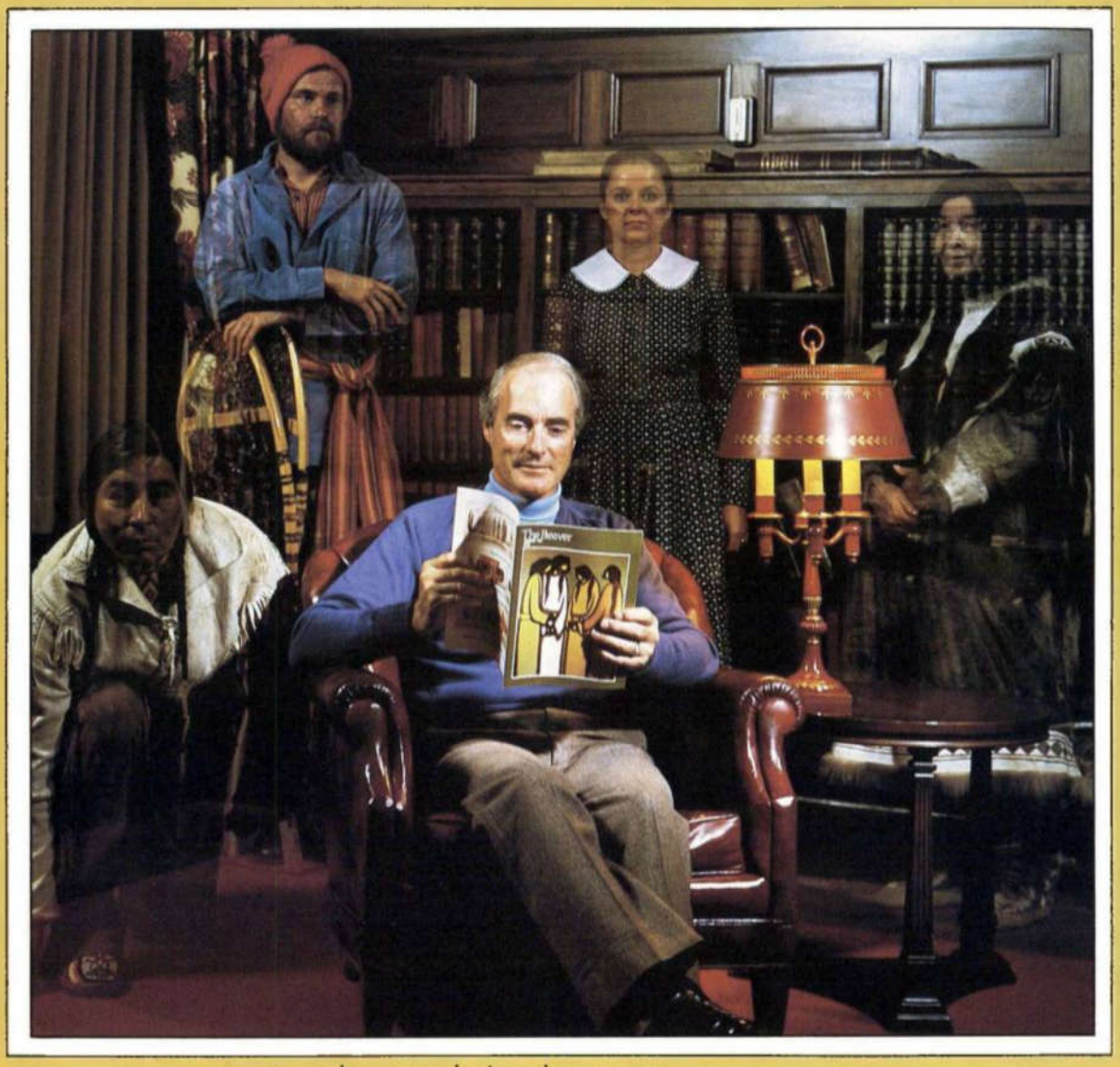

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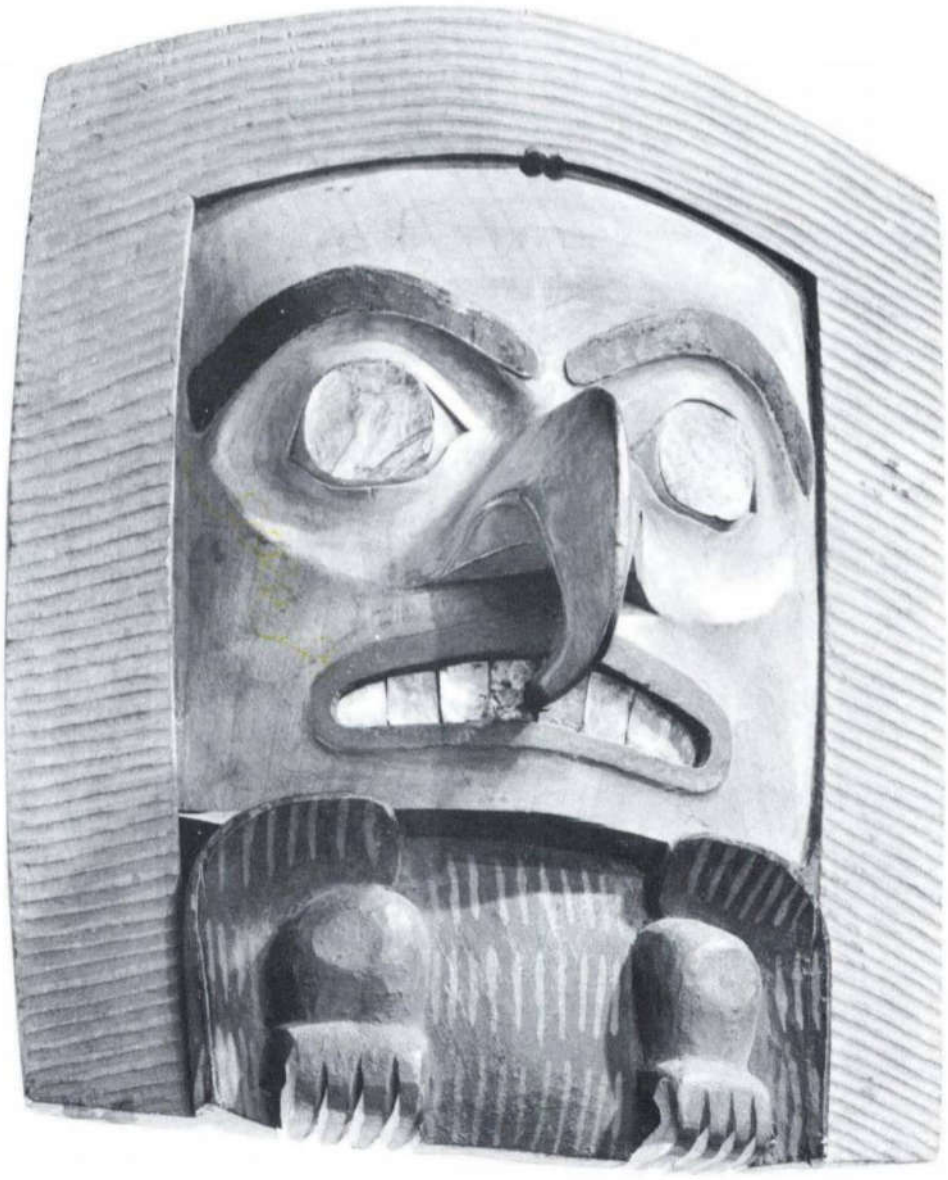

. . . we had a splendid passage over to Queen Charlotte's Islands. I suppose this is the wildest place I shall ever be at. It is solely inhabited by Indians, and as yet there is no missionary amongst them . . . We anchored opposite a village which, in the distance, looked like a forest of bare poles. These poles are heraldic, and are the monuments to chiefs . . . Every house seems to have one — and, as I think I said, they are highly valued — as symbols of rank. Some are carved the whole way up with grotesque figures and faces, some are painted; and in many houses the door is a part of the pattern of the pillar . . .

These poles at the village of Skidegate on the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia made a lasting impression on the author, Lady Dufferin, wife of the third Governor General of Canada. Written on Thursday, 31 August 1876, half-way through a month-long vice-regal tour of British Columbia, this passage appears as an entry in Lady Dufferin's personal diary, *My Canadian Journal*, published in 1891. The trip included stops at many native communities along the coast including Metlakatla, Alert Bay, Fort Simpson as well as Skidegate.

The Grand Tour, as the Dufferins called it, started on the morning of Monday, 31 July 1876, when a train pulled out of the station in Ottawa. The travelling party was headed by Lord Dufferin, Frederick Temple Hamilton Blackwood, who had been Canada's third Governor General for the previous four years. Born in June 1826 in Florence, Italy, Dufferin was the son of a wealthy British landowner and his wife, the granddaughter of the playwright and parliamentarian, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Educated at Eton and Oxford, Dufferin travelled widely in his youth, then accepted a peerage in 1850 and an earldom in 1871. After the rejection of his application for the position of Viceroy of India, the following year he readily accepted the appointment of Governor General of Canada.

During their six years in Canada, the Dufferins travelled to Quebec, the Maritime provinces, extensively through Ontario and to the Red River in Manitoba — giving Lord Dufferin the distinction of being the most widely travelled Governor General to that date. That last day in July 1876 marked the beginning of his most ambitious tour.

Lord Dufferin's main purpose for undertaking this journey was linked to the conflict surrounding the building of the transcontinental railway. As Governor General, he was eager to take a personal role in understanding the bitter controversy that had developed between British Columbia and the Dominion government concerning the terms of its construction and its final route. These political dealings, however, have overshadowed his travels to native communities — one of the first such visits by a prominent national figure.

During the 1860s and 1870s, the British Columbia government maintained a consistent policy of reducing the size allocations of reserves to make way for the settlement of European colonists. From the mid 1860s, concern was actively expressed by the Indian people that their interests in the land be acknowledged and adequately addressed. After British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871, jurisdiction over Indian lands became a federal affair and the two governments attempted to settle the land disputes with a joint reserve commission. Tensions rose, however, between the Indians and the settlers, petitions were made to the Indian agents on behalf of the Indian people, and the settlers became apprehensive that more direct measures would be taken.

As Governor General, Dufferin was aware of these problems. Two years before his Grand Tour, in November 1874, he stated his concerns over the inadequacy of the native land policy and the plight of the native people in the province. In a private letter to Lord Carnarvon at the Colonial Office, which was followed by an Official Dispatch dated 4 December 1874, Dufferin detailed in great length the "unsatisfactory" position of the Indian people and suggested that the Colonial Office give it their "serious attention".

Once Dufferin's official duties in Victoria were over, the vice-regal party boarded the *HMS Amethyst*, a British ship, and on the morning of Thursday, 24 August, steamed out of Esquimault harbour on their way up the coast. Accompanying the Governor General was a former Hudson's Bay Company officer who acted as interpreter. It took eight hours to reach their first stop at Nanaimo and another five days travelling 400 miles northward "through narrow channels and most beautiful scenery" before they arrived at the Skeena River. On the foggy evening of 29 August, the *Amethyst* anchored at Metlakatla.

The settlement of Metlakatla was established by William Duncan, a Protestant lay missionary, in May 1862 on the site of a former Tsimshian village. Duncan had originally gone to Fort Simpson in 1857 with the vision of eradicating the "abominations" of the natives and thus "saving the perishing heathen". His goal was the acculturation of the native people by producing a complete cultural change to a new Christian way of life. He attempted to point out the "evilness" and "corruption" of Tsimshian culture and preached the Christian path to salvation. He built a school in which the Indians were taught to read and write and were daily indoctrinated into Christian religious knowledge and "civilized" European ways. Although Duncan met

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Lord Dufferin.

with some success in Fort Simpson, he found that the conditions at the fort formed a barrier to this acculturation process. By 1860, the Tsimshian had all but abandoned trading at the fort. During the summer months, they took their furs to Victoria where they traded for alcohol and tobacco. In the winter, they returned to Fort Simpson bringing these goods back to the community. They also brought with them many diseases, particularly smallpox. The growing violence and social deterioration of Tsimshian society convinced Duncan that he should "move the mission to get away from the tide of disapation and vice I saw around me". So, in May 1862, Duncan, with fifty Tsimshian followers, left Fort Simpson to establish a model, self-sufficient community. The new mission was founded at Metlakatla, a few miles to the south.

At Metlakatla, Duncan adhered to his doctrine of bringing Christian civilization to the Tsimshian and regenerating their society in accordance with European ideals. He planned the physical layout of the village based on European models. The land was divided into lots, houses were built on carefully laid out streets using native labour, an enormous church was erected as well as a store, courthouse, saw-mill, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop and a school.

It was at this community situated on a large, well-protected bay that the Dufferins disembarked on the "lovely morning" of Wednesday, 30 August. Duncan conducted them on a tour of the village showing them through one of the houses, eventually arriving at the prison and the church. In her diary, Lady Dufferin describes their impressions of the village:

Wednesday, 30th — The Prison stands opposite; it is a funny little tower, painted black below and white above. It is divided into two rooms, the "black" prison being more disgraceful than the "white." On the top of this building there is a stand for the band! The Church comes next, and is quite new, having been built entirely by Mr. Duncan and the Indians. It is 120 feet long by 60, and is 50 feet high; it is made of cedar and cypress, and is, I suppose, the only building of the kind to be seen anywhere made by people so lately savage. It holds 1,200 people, and is very handsome inside. Of course it is made of wood, and is perfectly simple, but the proportions and the simplicity together give quite a grand effect.

The School is another very good building, and round its walls there are texts and pictures. The pupils all learn to read English, which they prefer for reading to their native tongue — their own words are so very long. They translate what they read into Tschimchyau.

Mr. Duncan has succeeded in educating them up to the idea of having separate bedrooms, and houses to themselves, instead of living five or six families together in one room; and the first of his new houses has just been put up. We went into it, and were received by the master and mistress; the former presented me with one of the masks they used to wear in their dances.

Lady Dufferin's reference to receiving objects of native manufacture is one that is constantly repeated in her journal. At Metlakatla, she is given a silver bracelet "made for me by the Indians" and she is so impressed with it that she tries to buy or commission similar items. She is also presented with "some spoons carved out of horn, Indian rattles, and a carved box with a set of teeth, and green eyes staring out of a face on its side". The Dufferins were to collect quite a "cargo" of Indian objects which returned with them to Ireland in 1878. These objects remain in the private collection of the present Marquess of Dufferin & Ava, except for 15 which are now in the National Museum of Man in Ottawa. Two of these, a rattle and a frontlet, were probably collected at Metlakatla.

The Dufferins were to spend only the morning at Metlakatla, for by one o'clock in the afternoon they left in the vessel *Douglas* for Fort Simpson, a community 24 miles to the north. Their arrival was unexpected and most of the inhabitants were away from the village, but they were greeted by the missionary's wife, Mrs. Crosby. It was here that the Dufferins first saw "some extraordinary monuments put up to Indian chiefs".

Lady Dufferin with album.

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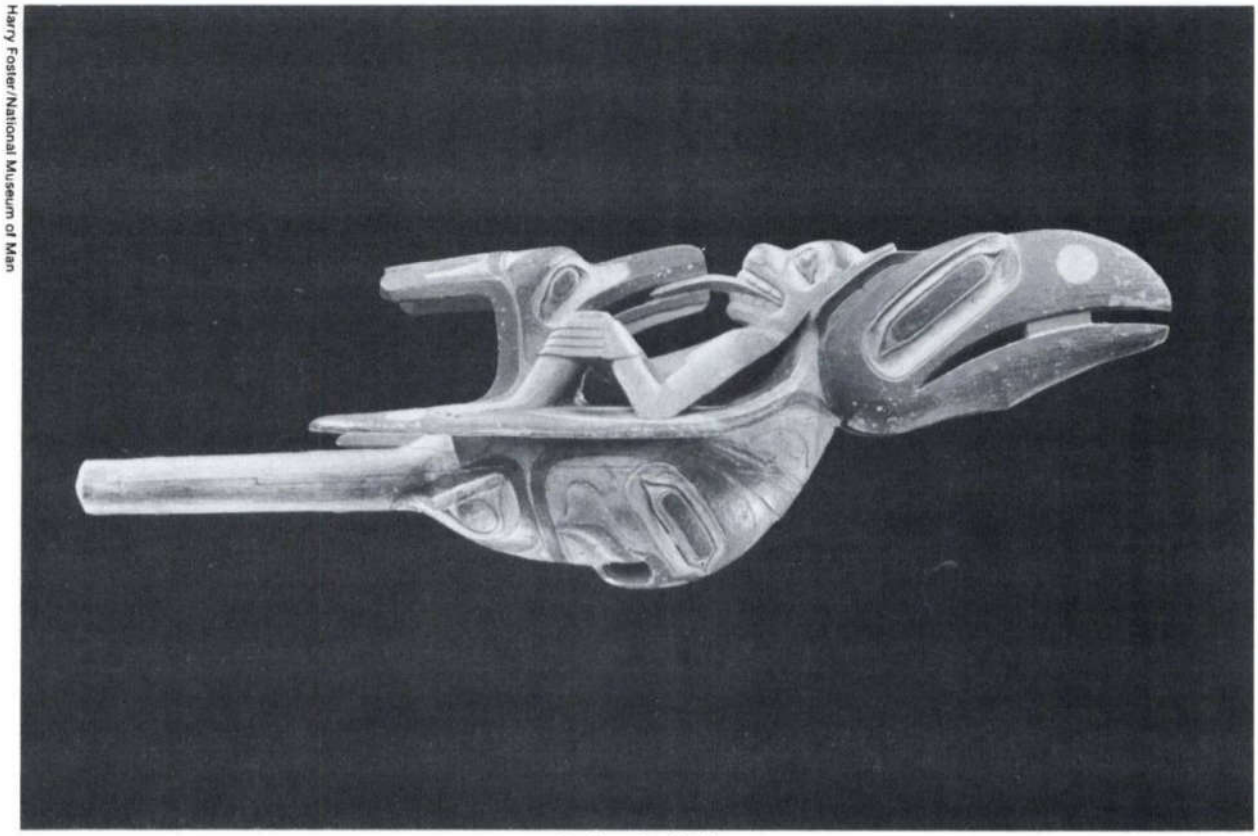

Harry Foster/National Museum of Man

Rattle made of cedar.

Wednesday, 30th — The most curious one we saw was an enormous bare pole, on the top of which was carved and painted in gigantic size a grinning head. The body was that of a bird with its wings spread out, and on each wing and on its breast a naked baby or imp; underneath was nailed a long cloth apron ornamented with buttons. Another pole had a dog at the top and a queer face carved below. These poles are said to cost the Indians about £300 apiece — that is to say, they will give away blankets to that amount for the privilege of putting one up.

Late that afternoon, the vice-regal party was on its way back to Metlakatla where they were met by canoes full of chanting Tsimshians who escorted the ship into the harbour.

The following morning after a thick fog had lifted, the *Amethyst* weighed anchor and headed for the Queen Charlotte Islands stopping at Skidegate Bay that evening. In his book, *The Sea of Mountains,* Molyneux St. John, a Toronto reporter accompanying the Dufferins, wrote:

> . . . as we returned round the rocky point which we had before passed, we came upon a scene unlike anything that can be found elsewhere upon the coast. The moon had risen while we stayed in the farther bay, and was now at the full, casting its rays across the water upon the Indian village. This concourse of houses, built almost in single line, stretched for some distance round the edge of the bay, the waters of which broke in silvery ripples, making a gentle splash from headland to headland. From the centre of every house, and also at a little distance out in front and in rear of many of them, rose heavy carved pillars ranging from thirty to sixty feet high standing out in relief against the sky high above the houses of which they were part, or to which they appertained. The houses themselves were particularly lost to view in the shadow of the hills, but the ascending columns in their varying heights rose clear above them into the moonlight . . . The village consists of about forty houses, each of which contains several families, as we found to be the case in most of these Indian settlements, and these houses are built in one continuous line, some little distance above high water mark. There are a few smaller houses — or storehouses — behind the others, but that which attracts the eye and rivets the attention at once is the array of carved cedar pillars and crested monuments that rise in profusion throughout the length of the village. In the centre of the front face of every house was

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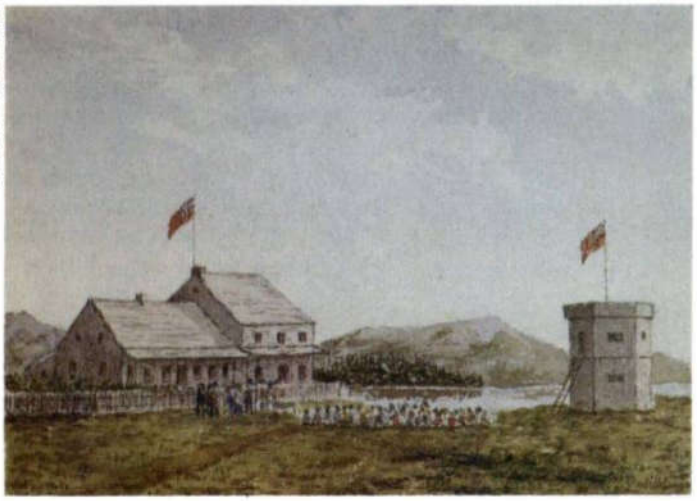
Metlakatla, British Columbia. Watercolour by Lord Dufferin.

It was at Fort Simpson that the Dufferins saw "some extraordinary monuments put up to Indian chiefs"

"Metlah Catlah" — 30 Aug. 1876. Watercolour by Lord Dufferin.



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Dufferin party aboard the Amethyst, 25 September 1876.

an upright pillar of cedar, generally about forty feet high and from two to three feet in diameter. From base to top these pillars had been made to take the forms of animals and birds, and huge grotesque human figures . . . The carvings were in some places elaborate, and in many places coloured. Some of the pillars, a few yards in front of the houses, were surmounted by life-size representations of birds or animals, the token of the family, coloured in a fanciful manner. In one or two instances there were outline carvings on a board surmounting a pillar, as a picture might be set on the top of a post. The main and tallest pillars, however, were those of which one formed the centre of each house, and through which entrance was had to the interior.

It was here that the Dufferins tried, unsuccessfully, to purchase one of the poles and "had great fun" bargaining for silver bracelets and carved bowls.

The fog was so heavy on Saturday, 2 September, that the *Amethyst* stopped at the harbour at Alert Bay, off the northeast shore of Vancouver Island, on its way back to New Westminster on the mainland.

Although the Dufferins were at the end of their trip up the coast, they still had another leg of their journey into the interior of the province.

Leaving New Westminster by steamer they started up the Fraser River on the evening of 6 September passing "lovely" scenery and "beautiful views" to their destinations of Hope and Yale. At Yale, they transferred to a carriage which would be their rather uncomfortable mode of transportation over the rough precipitous roads of the interior. As the road followed the Fraser River, Lady Dufferin commented:

Thursday, 7th — It was very curious to see the little Indian fishing establishments on the way. Wherever there was a rock rising a little above the water, there you were sure to see a scaffolding, upon which were hung rows and rows of dried fish, and near it a sort of spring-board jutting out into the water, upon which a man stood over the stream, and dipped a net, shaped like a snow-shoe, into it; we saw one man bring up a large trout, and cheered him from the carriage. Another curious thing we saw was a sort of house in which the Indians winter. A large hole is cut in the ground, and covered over with a round roof; in the top of this there is a hole, through which a notched pole is stuck, and by this the people go down — and through it the smoke comes up.

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ALASKA
Stikine R.
Skeena R.
BRITISH
COLUMBIA
Lake
Tatla
Nass R.
Fort Simpson
Metlakatla
Skeena R.
Ft. St. James
Stuart R.
Fraser R.
ALBERTA
QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS
Skidegate
Quesnel
Pacific
Ocean
Fraser R.
North Thompson
Columbia R.
Alert
Bay
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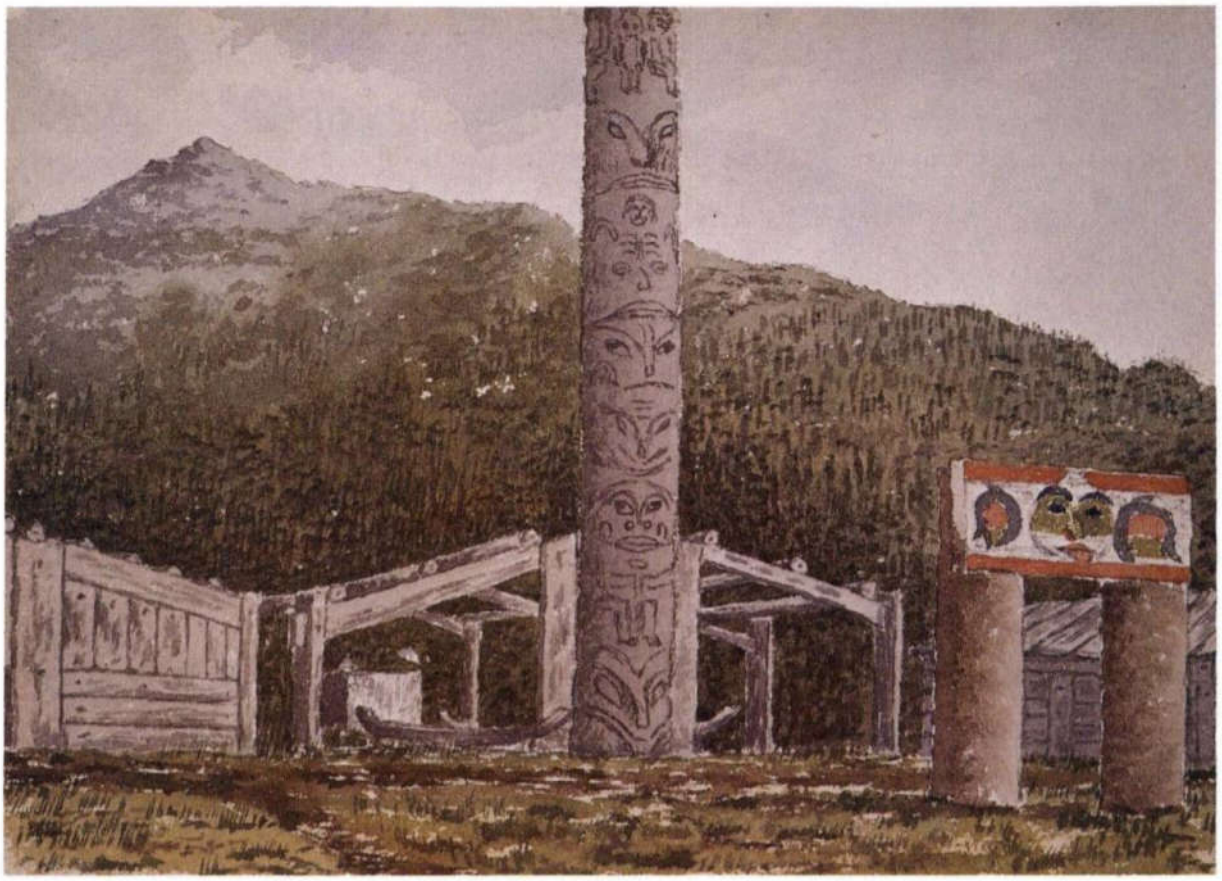

Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands, 1876. Watercolour on pencil by Lord Dufferin.

The entourage continued through the pouring rain to the small mining town of Lytton, then left the Fraser River valley to follow the Thompson River. On their way they passed some Indian graves.

> **Friday, 8th** — One was a lean-to shed, under which the body or bodies were laid, and in front of the grave were three tin pans; outside the shed, facing the road, stood three wooden figures, a man and two women, dressed up in the clothes of the deceased. On a tree close by hung a quantity of horse-skins. When a man dies, his friends eat a few of his horses, and hang up their skins, so that he may ride upon them to the Happy Land.

The Dufferins spent the next few days travelling by steamer and carriage to Kamloops, then retraced their steps to New Westminster and back to Victoria. It had been an arduous and exhausting journey, each day filled with deputations, speeches and addresses. The rough travelling conditions took their toll and the Dufferins were glad to return to their comfortable accommodations aboard ship.

Before Lord Dufferin left Victoria he spoke for over two hours at Government House on 20 September 1876. In his speech Dufferin outlined his recent travels through the province and gave his impressions of the country and its inhabitants. The bulk of the address dealt with the question of the railway and its Pacific terminus. Dufferin reserved his concluding remarks for the treatment of the Indians regarding their condition and land rights in the province. He admitted an official responsibility as Governor General. Because native rights were not represented in Parliament, "the Governor General is bound to watch over their welfare with especial solicitude". It was only through the office of the Governor General that the Indian people could bring their complaints and grievances to the attention of the Crown. His position on land title, however, was not all concerned with native rights and the Victorian sense of humanity and justice. He also worried about a possible insurrection that would affect the progress of the railway. As well, he didn't want any discredit brought to the reputation of the Dominion Government regarding its dealings with native land disputes.

Dufferin believed, as did most ethnocentric Victorians, that native people should be assimilated into the

secular and religious ways of British culture. He judged the degree of native civilization in comparison with British models. He was impressed with Metlakatla and Mr. Duncan's "neat Indian maidens . . . as modest and as well-dressed as any clergyman's daughter in an English parish" and praised the Indian of the interior of British Columbia as being "as proud of his stock-yard and turnip-field as a British squire". His concern for the welfare of his Indian subjects extended to their potential usefulness in alliance with European settlement. He urged the speedy assimilation of the population so that the Indian "raised to the higher level of civilization . . . might be made to contribute to the development of the wealth and resources of the province".

Dufferin maintained this belief throughout his life and his distinguished career in the British diplomatic service. In a speech delivered in England in May 1889, he described the relationship of native people to British imperialism: England, he said, "has learnt the secret of gradually weaving the new material of progress into the outworn tissues of ancient civilisations, and of reconciling every diversity of barbarous tribe to the discipline of a properly regulated existence". For the Indians of British Columbia, this was his ultimate goal.

Wherever Lord Dufferin went throughout Canada, he interrupted his busy schedule to pursue his hobby as an amateur artist. His trip to British Columbia proved no exception. Six watercolours painted during his Grand Tour are contained in an album which is now in the collection of the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. These watercolours provide a first-hand glimpse of the communities he visited, and the events he experienced.

The album was assembled by Lady Dufferin to illustrate her stay in Ottawa and the vice-regal travels from the east to the west coasts of Canada. The album contains about 68 pages of photographs, the six watercolours, postcards and engravings, a significant number of which refer to the couple's western tour.

As with all of Dufferin's work, the paintings executed in British Columbia are undated and unsigned. This, along with their inclusion in the album, has led to their attribution to Lady, rather than Lord Dufferin.

Indians serenading the Governor General at Metlakatla. Grey wash with touches of white gouache from Lord Dufferin's album.

Public Archives of Canada

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Chief's House, Alert Bay, 1876.

Throughout the travel accounts and diaries of the Dufferins, however, references are made to Lord Dufferin sketching and painting. During their British Columbian tour, Lady Dufferin writes in her diary that they "lunched at a place called Boston Bar, and D. (Dufferin) took several portraits of Indians there". The reporter, Molyneux St. John, wrote that at Alert Bay, "the Governor-General (came) ashore to sketch the village and its more picturesque groups of inhabitants". Following the Dufferins on their inland tour, the *British Columbia Daily Colonist* reported on 15 September 1876 that "the first landing was made at the town of Hope, where the Earl sketched some of the principal points of interest".

Nowhere is there any reference to Lady Dufferin sketching or painting, even though this was an acceptable activity of her contemporaries. In a recent biography of Lady Dufferin, included in the book *The Embroidered Tent,* Marian Fowler writes that Lord Dufferin "wrote poetry and painted in water-colours. While in Canada, it was Dufferin rather than his wife who always had his sketch-book in hand, and in 1876 he had two water-colours in the annual Ontario Society of Artists exhibit".

Many of Lord Dufferin's paintings are still preserved in private and public collections. Ten watercolours of the Gaspé, Ottawa and scenes of their trips to Manitoba and throughout Ontario are in the collection of the London Regional Art Gallery. Many other pencil sketches and watercolours are in the Public Archives of Canada and in the private collection of the present Marquess of Dufferin & Ava.

Lord Dufferin remained in Canada until October 1878, when his official duties came to an end with the arrival of the Marquess of Lorne to assume the position of Governor General. The Dufferins were not destined to stay in Britain long as Dufferin was given the ambassadorship in St. Petersburg and Constantinople, became High Commissioner in Egypt, was finally honoured with the post of Viceroy of India and ended his diplomatic career as ambassador in Rome and Paris. He died in 1902 at his estate of Clandeboye in Ireland where many of the objects he collected remain. ♦

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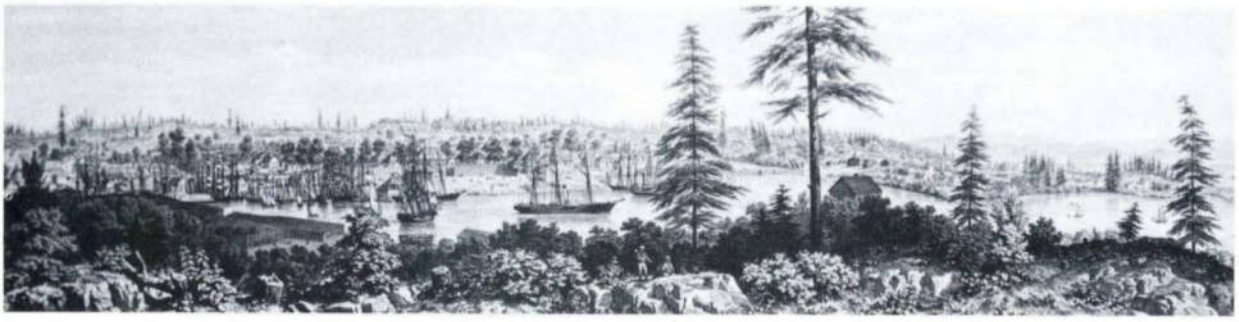
ROBERT BROWN AND THE VANCOUVER ISLAND EXPLORING EXPEDITION

By John Hayman



15 / June-July 1986

When Robert Brown arrived in Victoria in the spring of 1863 at the age of twenty-two, he was well qualified for the position of a botanical collector. Indeed, he was perhaps overqualified, as Brown himself seems to have thought. Following study at the University of Edinburgh between 1858 and 1862 and voyages to Iceland, Baffin Bay, and the shores of Northern Greenland, he had been appointed by the Botanical Association of Edinburgh "to collect seeds, roots, and plants." From the outset, however, Brown was unhappy with the notion that he should simply send back seeds for the Scottish landowners who had subscribed to the expedition. He had, after all, distinguished himself as a university student by winning two awards in botanical and marine studies, and he had also maintained that on the voyages to the Arctic to hunt whales and seals, he had followed his "favorite pursuits of Natural History and Natural Phenomenon." Essentially, he viewed himself as a scholar and a gentleman — and not as a seed-collector.

As a result, friction soon developed between Brown and his sponsor. Brown's first letter from Victoria to the association's sponsoring committee is not extant, but it apparently caused some unease, and one committee member noted in reply that Brown seemed to view the social position of the collector as superior to what they had imagined. Brown, on the other hand, came to feel acutely undervalued at a salary of £80 for the first year. "I am compelled to admit," he remarked early in 1864, "that not every Indian would 'pack' my blankets for that sum per annum — and any miner would tell me in no stinted language that working at that figure is 'played out.' " Moreover, Brown insisted that his expense account was insufficient for effective seed-collecting. "Travellers can now no longer travel in the [Hudson's Bay] Co. hunting grounds," he wrote, "living in their forts and travelling with their Brigades at little or no expense."

During the summer and fall of 1863 he travelled along the west coast of Vancouver Island to Nootka Sound and made two expeditions in the area of Great Central Lake, but he did little to satisfy his sponsor's appetite for seeds. In fact, by mid-May of 1864 — twelve months after he had arrived in Victoria — the association had still not received any seeds, and it contemplated dismissing him. Had the association known that at this time Brown was seeking the post of commander of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, it might have considered him a downright renegade and not hesitated to cut off support immediately.

The position of commander of an exploring expedition must have seemed attractive to Brown, quite apart from the social elevation that it would bring about. Sir Arthur Kennedy, the new governor of Vancouver Island, had agreed to contribute two dollars from government funds for every dollar contributed by private parties, and the expedition therefore had both a quasi-official status and the prospect of adequate financial support. Its organizing committee was made up of Victoria's leading business men, a number of whom were active in real estate. The pool of underemployed young men in Victoria from whom the expedition party might be drawn was also large. Above all, there was a widely recognized need for an exploration — and a special interest in the possibility of gold discoveries. A few years previously, a writer in the *Colonist* (16 March 1861) had resoundingly suggested that "practical men" on an exploration might "set the question at rest whether our island is auriferous or argentiferous or both." More recently, gold discoveries at Goldstream, close to Victoria, had encouraged fresh hopes. As commander of the expedition, Brown could therefore look forward to becoming the leader of a popular movement.

Brown presented his candidacy for the position of commander with considerable aplomb. At a crucial point, his accounts of his travels on the island were printed in a local newspaper, and in an accompanying note the editor remarked: "Dr. Brown's scientific mission has not been confined to any one branch of work, but includes Geography, Zoology, Geology, and Ethnology." Brown's formal application for the position also rang with assurance. "I am willing," he declared, "to undertake such work as would fall to the lot of a Botanist, Zoologist, & Geologist, & am able to furnish an accurate & complete report upon the topography, soil, timber & resources."

On 1 June 1864, the committee formally appointed Brown as commander, declaring that it had "full confidence in his capacity, zeal, and integrity." Brown, however, seems to have been aware that his Scottish sponsors might question his integrity in taking on this new role. In a letter of explanation, he therefore noted that he had been not only appointed as a commander with "despotic power" but also given "the (honorary) rank of Agent Government & a Magistrate." . . . "So that in future," he pointedly remarked, "I will travel with power & not as the poor unknown plant hunter of last year." In addition, his expedition would not cost the association anything, and he would have "a strong escort" which included an assistant to collect seeds. Unfortunately, the committee in Edinburgh was not impressed by these considerations. In reply, the secretary described Brown's letter as "a most unsatisfactory Communication." . . . "It now appears," the secretary remarked, "that you have accepted another situation . . . utterly incompatible with the duty which you owe to this association." Clearly, Brown had complicated his already difficult relationship with his Scottish sponsor.

Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Frederick Whymper, Camp Cowichan Lake. Kakalatza can be seen wearing his top hat. Page 15: View of Victoria, circa 1860.

As to the "strong escort" provided by the expedition, Brown himself described it in rather different terms in other contexts. "A queer looking lot," he remarked on one occasion and "wondrously motley" on another.

As travelling artist, the committee selected Frederick Whymper, the son of a well-known English engraver, who had arrived on Vancouver Island in the fall of 1862. The following year, he had travelled to the Cariboo, and in the spring of 1864 he had joined the road builders who were working inland from the Bute Inlet. He had left this group just before it was massacred by Indians, and he consequently attracted some publicity upon his return to Victoria in May 1864, just when the committee was about to make its appointments. Again, Brown may not have been strictly accurate when he later described Whymper as "an artist . . . who has for some time been more familiar with the gold-miner's pick than with the painter's palette," but Whymper was no effete aesthete. His published account of part of the expedition in *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska* (1868) suggests that he relished physical danger, and he managed to complete over thirty drawings on the expedition, often under the most difficult circumstances.

Two other members of the group had earlier served in the Royal Engineers, the corps that had recently been disbanded: John Meade, who had arrived in Victoria as a lance corporal in 1858, and Lieutenant Peter John Leech who was appointed as second-in-command at a monthly salary of $100. (All other members were paid $60.) There were also two university graduates: Henry Thomas Lewis, a graduate of Cambridge University, who declared in his application that he was "a practical farmer," an experienced gold miner, and "a good shot," and Alexander Barnston, a graduate of McGill University, who described himself as "well habituated to the hardships & dangers of a life in the woods." The committee's relatively disinterested quest for knowledge is possibly reflected by the appointment of John Buttle, a former student of Sir William Hooker at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and a botanist on the British-North American Boundary Commission. John Foley was perhaps a more practical choice: he described himself as "thoroughly acquainted with quartz and copper mining and bush travel," and Whymper said of him that he "knew more of gold and its whereabouts than any five other men." Finally, there was Ranald MacDonald, undoubtedly the most col-

Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Robert Brown, photograph taken in Victoria by G.R. Fardon, 1865.

ourful and entertaining of the group. His father was a Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor and his mother a daughter of Com-Comly, a Chinook Indian chief. As a young man, he had pursued a picturesque career which had included almost a year in Japan, nominally as a prisoner. Eventually, after a visit to the Australian gold-fields, he had returned to the Northwest. At 40, he was the oldest of the explorers, but his persistent high spirits made him, according to Brown, the "Mark Tapley" of the group.

On 7 June, the exploration party left Victoria aboard the gun-boat *H.M.S. Grappler* for Cowichan. Some hundred settlers had arrived in this area two years previously, and the explorers were generously entertained there. Brown was especially impressed by Jean Compagnon, a "venerable old gentleman," who had settled close to the Indian village of Comiaken, near the mouth of the Cowichan River. "His garden was arranged into terraces & bowers," Brown noted, "with shady seats & all spick and clean." The explorers camped close by and benefited from Compagnon's vegetable garden. "Gastronomically speaking," as Whymper remarked, "we were very sorry to leave."

When the party did set out after a couple of days, it had increased in number. Kakalatza, a joint chief of the Somenos, had been hired to guide the party to Cowichan Lake. "He is a queer looking old man with a tuft of hair on his chin," Brown reported, "and wears a 'stove' hat when dressed in state." This hat attracted a good deal of comment, since Kakalatza insisted on bringing both it and a hat-box with him on the journey — "and every night," Whymper remarked, "he carefully deposited his beaver in it, before retiring into his blankets."

Tomo Antoine (who is also known as Toma and Thomas Antony) was an even more significant addition, since he remained with the group until the completion of the expedition. "His father was an Iroquois voyageur from Canada," Brown wrote, "his mother a Chinook from the Columbia River. He had for forty years moved about over the country among Hudson Bay forts and hunting stations — voyageur, farmer, hunter, trapper — possibly worse." By this ominous conclusion, Brown is probably referring to the suspicion that Tomo had recently murdered his wife. (He had been acquitted on grounds of insufficient evidence.) Brown, however, recognized Tomo's value. He had travelled on expeditions with Sir James Douglas and J.D. Pemberton, the colonial surveyor, and he was familiar with some of the terrain the group was to explore; he was a good linguist; and despite having only one arm, he was a celebrated hunter.

With Kakalatza guiding a canoe party up the Cowichan River and Tomo guiding an overland group, the expedition set out from Comiaken on 9 June. Both

parties experienced some difficulty: dense undergrowth and a water level that sometimes made it necessary to haul the canoe upstream from the bank. On arrival at Cowichan Lake after a week's travel, they therefore had some sense of accomplishment, and the week at the lake was perhaps the most agreeable part of the expedition. First, there was some successful gold prospecting in a creek flowing into the lake. "Great News!" Brown noted in his journal. "All the party elated." Promptly, he named the creek after Foley, the leading prospector.

Subsequently, there was also a promising excursion into the hills north of the lake. Foley was exuberant about a "hill of quartz" and "a perfect Mountain of Copper ore & Ironstone" — "the richest copper vein I have seen in the country," Brown remarked. With a keen eye for future development, Brown also remarked on the logging potential of the area, noting that there were trees as much as thirty-eight feet in circumference. Later, he was to write of these days at the lake in ideal terms:

> The forests were fragrant with the piny odour, the large white flowers of the dogwood . . . were reflected in the glassy bays of the lake; woodpeckers tapped the trees merrily; grouse drummed in the woods; humming-birds darted like winged gems of emeralds and rubies among the flowery currant bushes; while the lordly-looking bald-headed eagle . . . sat perched on the topmost branch of some giant fir, now and then swooping down to draw a trout from the lake. These were halcyon days. The woods echoed with our joyous laugh and song, and the hills with the reports of the hunter's rifle; there was nothing to make us uneasy.

Granted the high spirits of the explorers, it was perhaps unfortunate that Brown should have thought it advisable to divide the group at this point, but he recognized that the expedition might cover more territory by this procedure. Accordingly, Leech was made commander of a group that was to travel from the south side of the lake to Port San Juan (now known as Port Renfrew). Brown's party, meanwhile, would travel from the western end of the lake, follow the Nitinat River to the coast, and then re-unite with Leech's party at Port San Juan.

For Whymper, the journey down part of the Nitinat on a raft seems to have been the most exciting part of the whole expedition:

> On the "riffles" [he wrote] it was pure fun mixed with a dash of danger. The current acting on the stern of our craft with 300 lb. — MacDonald's weight, as steersman — took it under water several feet, while the bows were elevated in the air. Several times a curious sight might have been witnessed, that of a raft shooting past at the rate of six or eight miles per hour, and, standing nearly upright in the water, a "raft rampant," as it were, with a couple of half-drowned explorers hanging on with comical desperation.

Frederick Whymper, The Rampant Raft, from Travel and Adventure in Alaska, 1868. Whymper and MacDonald descend the Nitinat.

According to MacDonald, Whymper was "only a feather weight," and the partners must therefore have seemed a comic couple — a veritable Laurel and Hardy of the Northwest.

After almost a week of travel by land and water, the group arrived at Whyac, a Nitinat village on the coast, and it is apparent from Brown's description that the party was wary about its reception by the Indians. "Some of their faces [were] smeared with blood," he noticed, "others blackened, but not the war black which is darker round the eyes than the rest of the face and nearly all with shell (pieces of Haliotis [abalone shell]) in the ears and nostrils; all proffering great joy at the arrival of white men at their village." By Brown's estimate, the Nitinats had about four hundred fighting men, and recollection of the recent Chilcotin massacre at Bute Inlet made the party nervous. "The Nitinats have a very bad name," Brown ominously noted. The Nitinats were also hard bargainers, and Brown was forced the next day to pay $15 for a canoe and three pilots to take the party to Port San Juan — "which I daresay was more than enough," he wryly remarked.

It was at Port San Juan that Brown seems first to have felt that the sponsoring committee in Victoria

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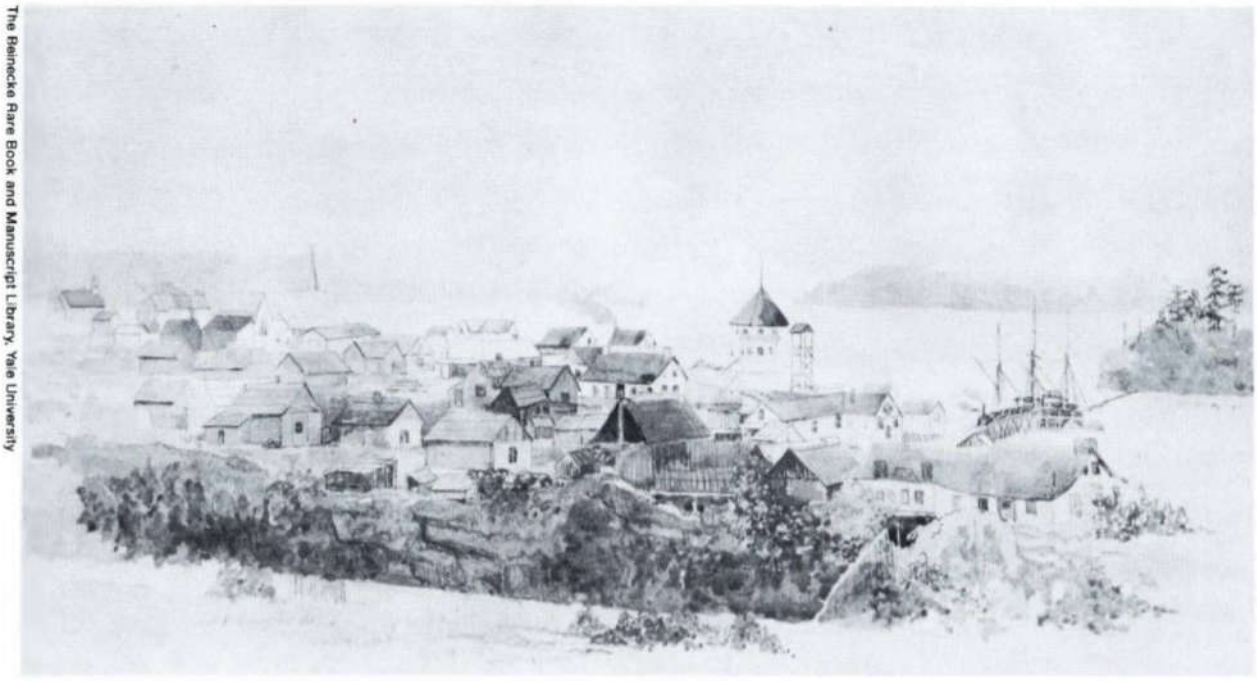

Frederick Whymper, Nanaimo.

Frederick Whymper, Alberni.

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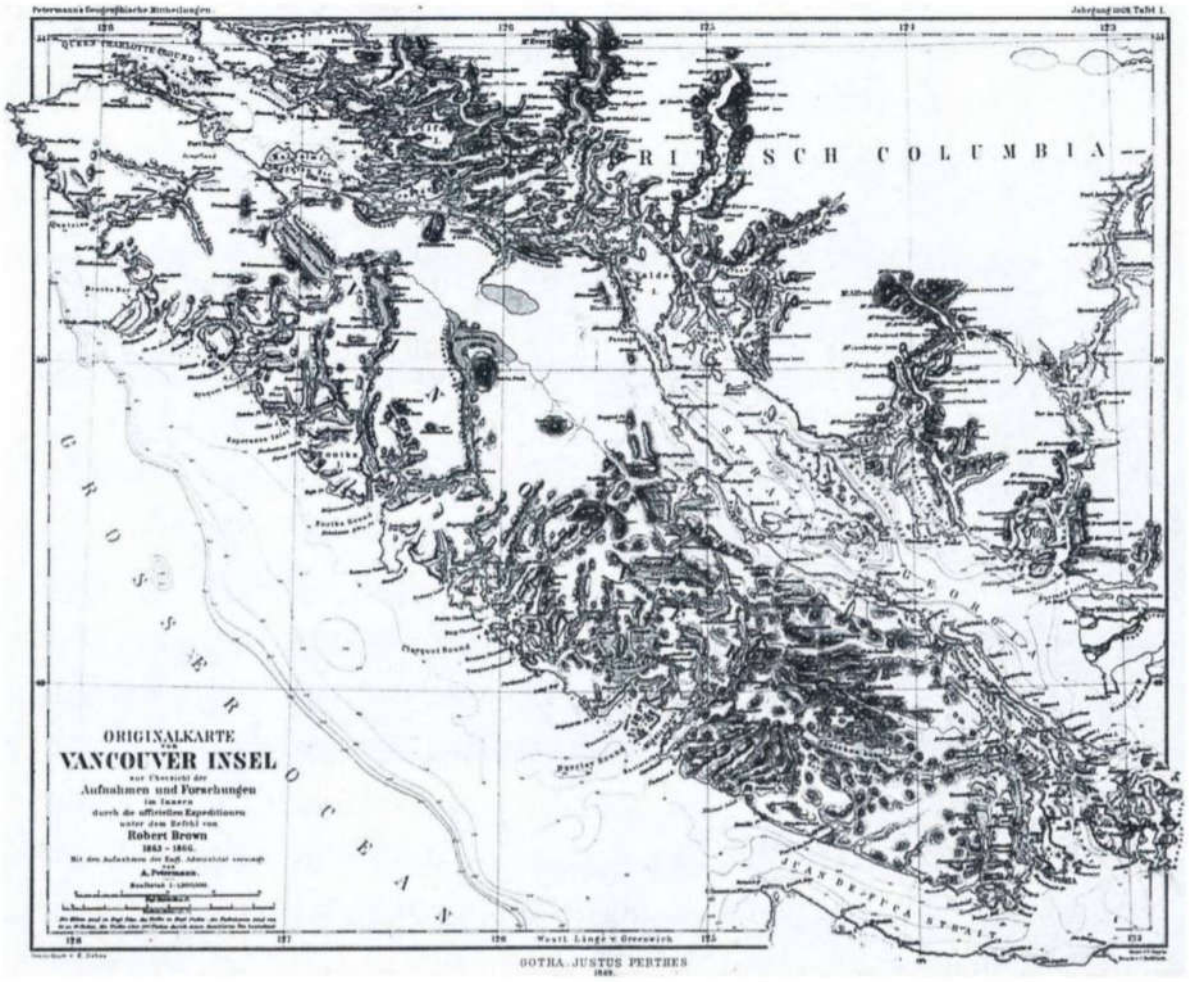
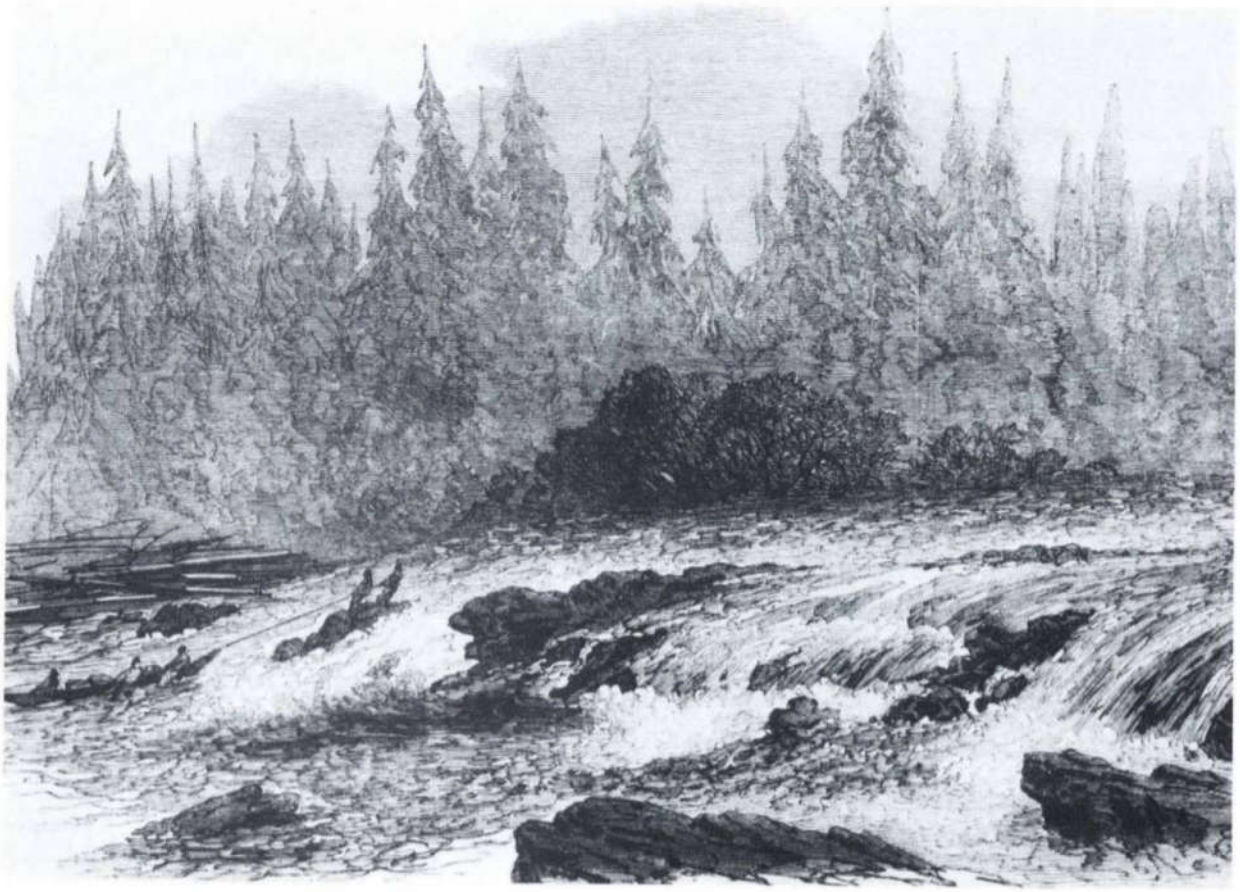
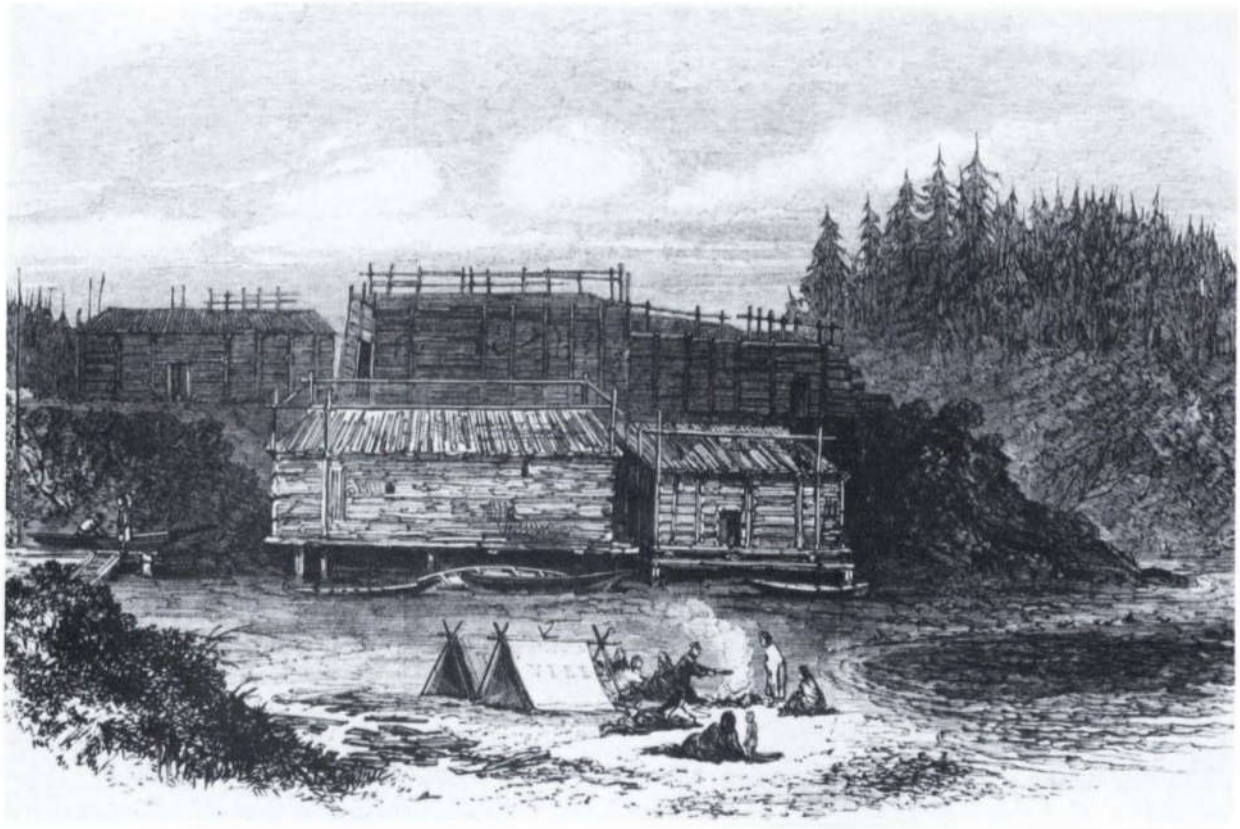


Map of Vancouver Island published with translation of Brown's "Memoir of the Geography of the Interior of Vancouver Island", 1869.

was not treating the explorers generously. On arrival there, he found that the expected supplies had not been delivered, and he did not realize that the supply ship had been forced to turn back by heavy seas. Subsequently, when the supplies arrived a few days later, there was an accompanying dispatch urging that Brown should exercise "the strictest economy . . . consistent with the comfort of yourself and those under your Command." These references to "economy" and "comfort" seem to have riled Brown. Leach's party had just experienced an especially tortuous route, and they had arrived at Port San Juan "worn out with fatigue and hunger, and their clothes in tatters," having been forced by dense and mountainous terrain to bushwack some forty miles to cover a distance on the map of about half that distance. In his dispatch to the committee, Brown therefore referred to "the Herculean labour of penetrating the country . . . in nearly every respect the country most difficult to be penetrated of any in the world." With a chilling composure, he remarked further: "Your admonition about being economical of the provisions is somewhat uncalled for; for as you are well aware at the outside they are totally inadequate for our wants unless we killed game."

After travelling along the coast to Sooke and again entrusting the expedition to Leech, Brown set out on 13 July with Barnston for Victoria — in part to confront the committee and clarify his relationship with it. It seems, however, that the attempt at clarification failed and that Brown became increasingly disturbed by the committee's preoccupation with the discovery of gold. Finally, he expostulated with the committee:





> Though in deference to the wishes of the body of our people, I have ordered that the greater portion of our attention should be devoted to minerals, yet at the same time, minerals only form in conjunction with geography, timber & Agricultural lands, &c, &c — one of several subjects to which our attention is to be devoted. We are not a "prospecting expedition" any more than we are a party of loggers, seeking sites for camps, or farmers looking for land, & whenever the expedition diverges wholy into either of these subjects I must request of you to relieve me of my charge to make way for some more fitting director.

Even more pressing was Brown's need to clarify his position with his Edinburgh sponsors. At Port San Juan he had received a letter urging him to concentrate on collecting seeds and requesting that he account for his activities by sending back his journal. On arriving in Victoria, he found a further letter, the gist of which indicated that unless "full and satisfactory explanation of his conduct [was forthcoming] . . . the Committee would be under the necessity of recalling his appointment."

On 18 July — two days after his expostulation with the Victoria committee — he responded to these communications from Edinburgh in an eighteen-page letter that constituted his *de profundis*. Moving between resentment and contrition, he began by declaring that he had been unjustly treated. "You have already condemned me without hearing me," he asserted. Sorrowfully, he agreed to return to his starting-point — that of seed-collecting. True, he had earlier supposed that his task was of "more than a mere commercial character," but the order that he collect "hogs heads casks of seeds" had now revealed his thorough misconception. Of his acceptance of this humble role, he continued: "It was like death to me, but it was done." In separate letters to members of the sponsoring committee, he implored them not to abandon him. "Do not I pray you Dr. Balfour loose [sic] faith in me — else I will loose confidence in myself & break down under my sorrows . . . I am only 22 years. You thought me older I daresay." This appeal to his young age is especially poignant, and it suggests that Brown not only demanded much of himself but felt the strain of others' expectations. He was, in fact, the youngest man on the expedition by several years; Leech, the second-in-command, was more than fifteen years older.

Unfortunately, the emotional tone of these letters had the opposite effect to that intended by Brown. One member of the committee reacted "with the utmost

Views by Whymper. Below: "Quoitquot" or Foley's Creek, Cowichan Lake, North side. Page 22: (top) The Laughing Water Rapids on the Puntledge, (bottom) Whyack Village, all from The Illustrated London News, 1866.

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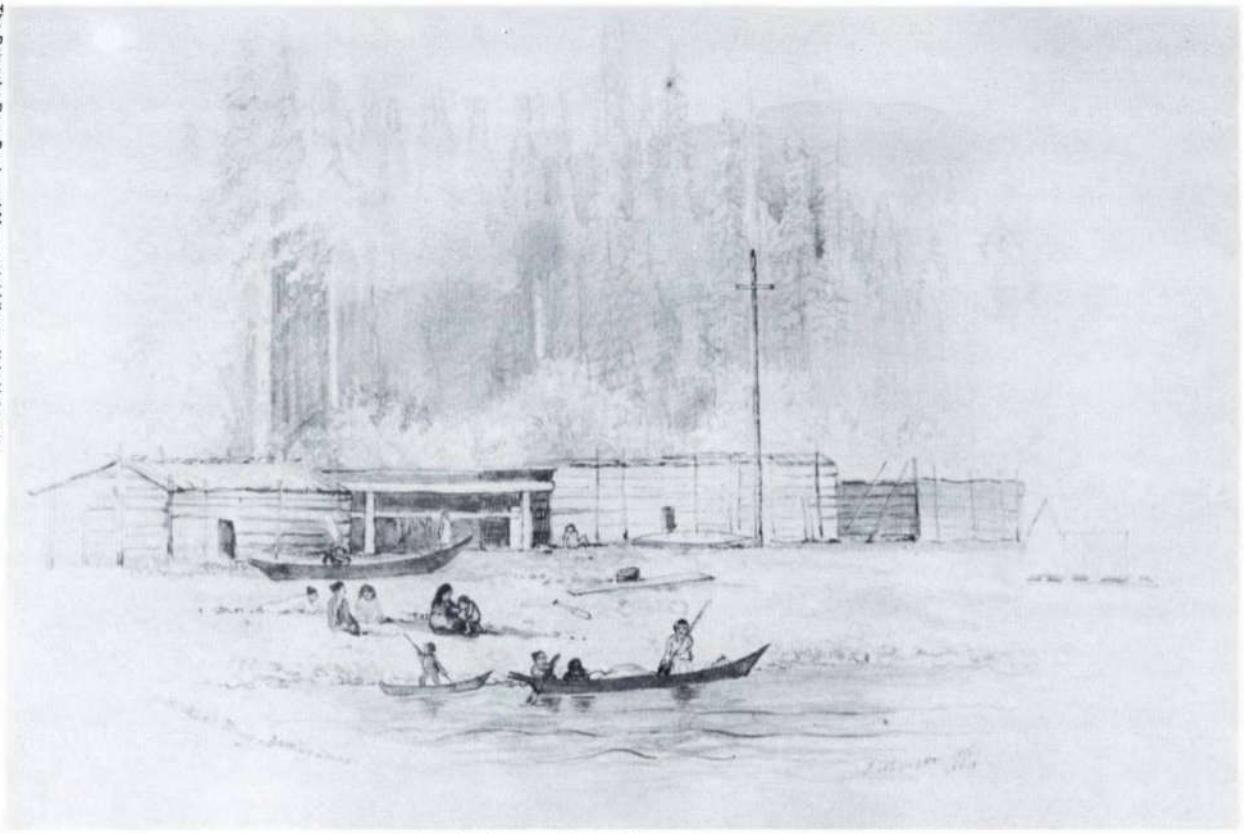


Frederick Whymper, Ouchucklesit Village, Barclay Sound.

disgust" and wrote to the secretary: "The man is an idiot, and his letters are such a rigmarole of nonsense he must have been drunk when he wrote them." Brown's emotional state at this time is indeed the more disturbing when one recalls his earlier bearing: his adroit arrangement of publicity which led to his appointment as commander, his considered plan for the expedition, and his account of the good spirits of the men at the outset. But from the beginning there had been the possibility of upset. Reluctantly, Brown had been forced to recognize that his sponsors in Edinburgh viewed him simply as a seed-collector, and he had hoped that the committee in Victoria would be more enlightened and encourage a more liberal exploration. However, he had gradually come to realize that it viewed him as the leader of a gold-prospecting party. By trying to serve two masters, he had not gained in status but merely confirmed his humble standing.

There was yet another irony: it was during Brown's absence from the expedition that the party made its most sensational discovery — a discovery that was to lead to the island's most celebrated gold rush and to imperil further the progress of the expedition itself.

When Brown set out from Victoria to join the exploration party at Cowichan, he had no idea that the explorers had made a significant gold discovery on a branch of the Sooke River that they had promptly named after Leech. At Cowichan, however, he found that the explorers were "wild with excitement," and he perhaps reluctantly admitted that "the coarse gold was enough to excite anyone."

Two days later, Brown had downright disturbing news to report. Dissension within the group had broken out. According to Brown's account, Foley had become responsible for much bad feeling, and events reached a climax when "in a quarrel at dinner Mr. Foley drew a knife on McDonald." Immediately, Brown called for Foley's resignation. In his letter to the committee, he acknowledged that Foley had been "a good workman", but described him also as "a notorious braggart & insincere to the last degree . . . the most plausible fellow in the world, a Yankee at the backbone." Even more pointedly, he noted Foley's preoccupation with prospecting. "He looked upon the whole Expn.," Brown wrote, "as wholy a mining party . . . & anything out of mining a mere waste of time." The committee responded just as pointedly by selecting "two efficient miners" as replacements for Foley.

Brown was now anxious to get the expedition under way, and on 1 August the party set out for Nanaimo.

Difficulties persisted. At Nanaimo, Brown was unable to find the Indian packer that the explorers now felt they merited, and Brown feared that they might desert the expedition. This fear increased, too, when it was discovered that Foley had shrewdly gone into business on his own. Following the foundation of Leechtown, he had begun to advertise in the press a guide service to the "Sooke Gold Mines" — "this new El Dorado."

Perhaps it was just as well that Brown now divided the group. His own group was to journey by sea to Comox and then cross the island to Alberni. Leech's group was to journey to Cowichan Lake by way of the Nanaimo Lakes and re-unite with Brown at Alberni.

Again, Leech's party had the more hazardous route. When they reached Cowichan Lake, Buttle noted that they had "little else left but tea, sugar and flour and not a good deal of that," and their subsequent hardship is indicated by the names of their camps: Hungry Creek, Starvation Creek, and Misery Camp. After almost a week's trek from Cowichan Lake, they resolved that on the following day they would eat their dog. Fortunately, on that day they arrived at Sarita Lake and caught four small trout. "They were the most delicious morsel I ever tasted," Barnston recorded, "but when divided Among Seven one share was truly a morsel." The next day they encountered an Indian who supplied them with salmon, guided them to the Alberni Canal, and arranged their canoe journey to the logging settlement at Alberni. Here they were treated with the customary hospitality of those associated with the sawmills.

Brown, on the other hand, had an agreeable canoe trip along the coast to Comox and was treated there as a dignitary by the settlers who had arrived in the area just a year or two before. Aware of his position as an agent of the government, the settlers presented their case against Victoria's maintaining its status as a free port, arguing that this was injurious to agricultural development on the island. Brown was suitably flattered by this appeal to his influence, but not particularly sympathetic. Many of the "settlers" were not really settlers at all, he decided, but prodigal sons waiting to be recalled into the bosoms of British families. There was, as well, a "want of confidence . . . manifested by most of the settlers . . . and a sort of 'Waiting for something to turn up' . . . disposition."

At Comox, Brown also attended to the complaints of Indians. From the outset of the expedition, he had shown sympathy with their plight, setting down in his journal the address of the Indians in the Cowichan area:

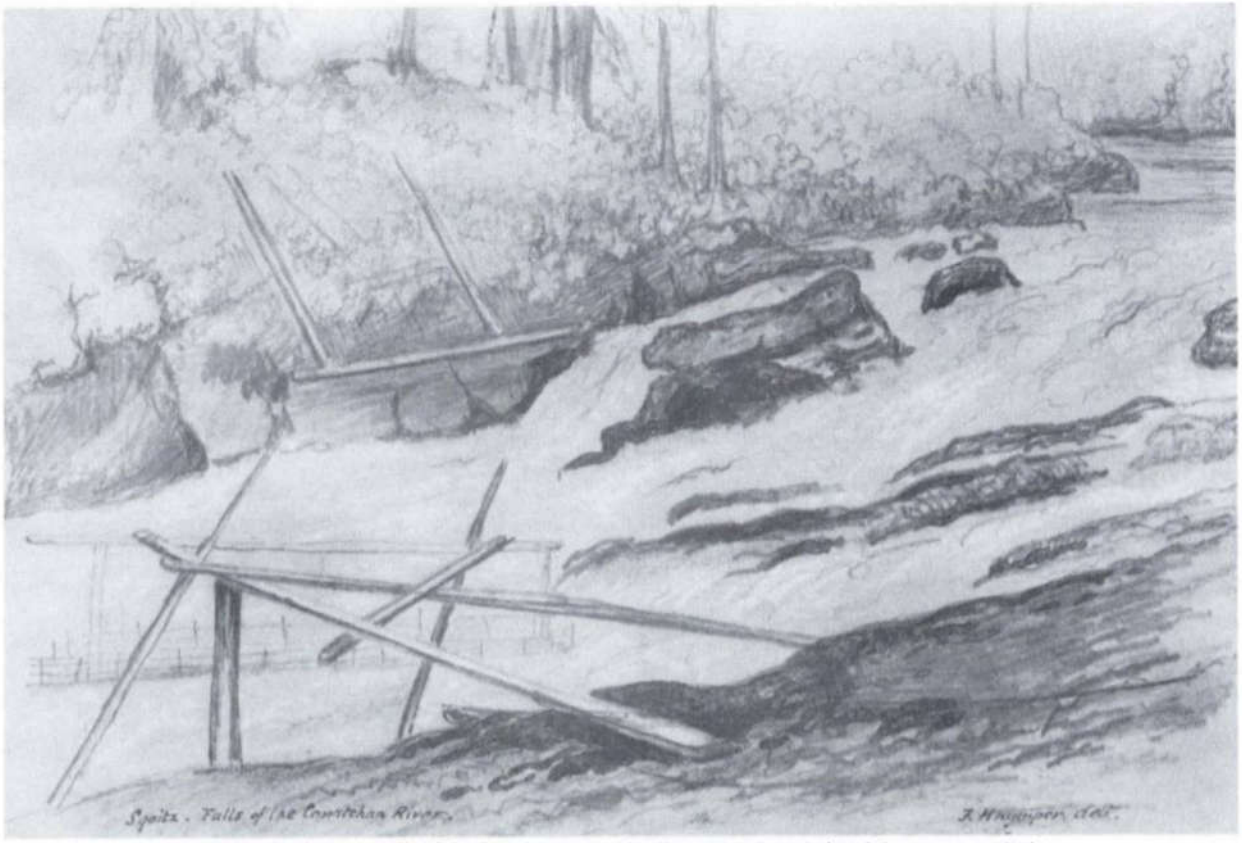
> They say "You came to our country. We did not resist you. You got our women with children & then left them upon us — or put them away when they could have no children to keep up our race. . . . You brought diseases amongst us which are killing us. You took our lands and did not pay us for them. You drove away our deer & salmon . . . & now if we wish to buy a glass of fire water to keep our hearts up you will not allow us. What *DO* you white men wish?"

To these complaints, Brown had tersely responded: "This is in part very true." Now, in Comox, he was again confronted by the question: "Had you no good land of your own that you come and deprive us of ours?" But at this later point, he seems less sympathetic, perhaps both because of the frustration he had experienced in gaining the assistance of Indians and because he wished to display his reliability to his superiors. Rather than record an Indian's speech, he set down his own. First, he defended the incursions of the white man by the conventional argument "that the Indian instead of cultivating his land went to war & was very wicked." Then he outlined the positive value of the white man's presence:

> My mind is You have got much good by us King Georges — When we came you were ragged in a skin blanket or a poor one that you made of bark or dogs-hair. You have now shirt & Hat, coat, trousers & boots. Who brought them among you? . . . Who gave you tea, tobacco, flour & sugar & Molasses & Biscuits you are so fond of? Was it not King George man? Who taught you to shoot and gave you Musket powder and shot, axes and knives and all good things? Was it not King George man?

Brown seems also at this point to accept the values of his superiors in his attention to mineral exploration. Not that he had been converted overnight to gold-prospecting. Instead, he became elated about a coal seam near the junction of Puntledge River with an unnamed river. Tomo led two members of Brown's party to this seam, and the group promptly named the river after Brown. Equally excited by the discovery and the naming of the river, Brown camped at the outcropping when his group started its ascent of the Puntledge. Their camp fire was built from the coal. "It burnt splendidly all night," Brown reported. "The discovery is of inestimable value & it is certainly the best on the Pacific."

The group was now travelling without local Indian guides and packers, and they soon realized the hazards of this enterprise. The canoe that they had purchased for $20 — "a very good bargain," according to Brown — proved too large for the river, and to avoid being dashed on the rocks, they were forced to wade in the water and drag the canoe on ropes. In addition, they were several times forced to portage their provisions, which included thirty pounds of bacon. Some days they journeyed only two or three miles, and the journey to



Frederick Whymper, Falls of the Cowichan River. The illustration shows Indian fish trapping methods.

Comox (or Cumberland) Lake therefore took them a week (1-7 September).

At the lake, they had the diversion of hunting for beaver. Brown was later to describe the process whereby they broke down the beavers' dams and then shot the beavers as they rushed to defend their structures. "It was a cruel sport," he conceded somewhat apologetically, "but the hunter's life is not at best, a very humane one, and hunger generates a loose code of morals." MacDonald estimated that one of the beavers shot weighed sixty pounds. "Found the beaver excellent," Whymper laconically remarked. "Rather too fat & rich."

Their fishing was less successful, perhaps because bacon and beaver was not a tempting bait. Other possibilities for hunting also abounded, if Brown's later recollection is credited. Of an excursion with Tomo, he was to write: "Here I heard the cry of the marmot & a noble elk ran along the mountain side while deer ambled out of every thicket and the grouse sat drumming over every fallen log. We shot them down with our pistols." No apologies, it seems, on this occasion.

At Comox Lake, they were forced to abandon their canoe after it hit a tree on an excursion up a river emptying into the lake. "In a second," Brown wrote, "[the canoe] was cracked up like a nut-shell into a hundred pieces, and we were spilt in the swift current." After this, the explorers reverted to make-shift rafts for the succession of lakes that they were to encounter on their trek to Alberni. On 22 September, three weeks after setting out from Comox, they arrived at Great Central Lake, which Brown had explored the previous year. From there they headed south to a lake Brown had earlier named Sproat Lake, and then canoed down the Somass River to the logging settlement at Alberni. For the previous few days they had been unsuccessful in hunting and had been reduced, according to Whymper, to "a diet of soggy bread with a kind of thin paste or soup of flour and water; not very good 'working' grub." They were relieved therefore to be welcomed by the managers of the sawmill.

At Alberni, the exploration virtually ended — apart from some excursions along the Canal (or Inlet) itself. Summer was almost over; uneasy relations with Indians along the West Coast made exploration there hazardous; and the explorers themselves were, as Barnston noted, "pretty well tired of forest life." In addition, Brown recognized that he should now attend to seed-collecting for his other sponsor. On 14 October, he therefore decided to set out for Victoria, and on the

same day he received notice of recall by way of a ship docking at Alberni.

The exploration party now planned to cross the island, from Alberni to Qualicum River, on a trail that was reportedly well established. Brown had been assured, in fact, that it was "beautiful . . . like a turnpike," but the explorers found otherwise. For part of the crossing, Brown recorded, "our way lay over nothing but drifts of fallen timber, along which we 'cooned it,' like squirrels, never during the whole distance touching mother earth." After arriving finally at the coast, they travelled by canoe to Nanaimo and there boarded the *Grappler* for the journey to Victoria. On 21 October, after an expedition of almost four and a half months, they arrived back on the gunboat on which they had set out.

Meade provided a summing up on the expedition at the close of his journal:

597 miles by canoe
45½ by raft
586½ by land

Whymper set down the hunting tally:

Deer 25
Elk 3
1 Beaver
1 coon
1 martin
Grouse, ducks, plover &c in numbers at certain places. Also limited number of fish caught. The larger game almost entirely shot by Tomo and Indians. Lewis shot 1 elk and 1 deer.

Brown's task of providing an account of his activities for his Scottish sponsors was more delicate, but he was apparently unable to summon an appropriate tact. In a letter written on board the *Grappler*, he displayed hurt pride in remarking that he became commander of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition out of necessity — "for bread", as he basically expressed it. He also asserted a qualified independence in declaring: "I wish no pay, as on my return home I propose to publish a narrative of my adventure and travels . . . From the nature of the book it is certain to be a paying concern."

A couple of months later, in January, 1865, Brown went even further. Having just arranged shipment of the seeds collected on the expedition, he informed the Edinburgh committee: "there is nothing remaining for me but to sever my connection with the association." Brown now had hopes of being appointed to a position that seemed about to be created — namely, that of Superintendent of Indian Affairs — but the creation of the position was delayed, and Brown was relieved when the Botanical Association did not accept his resignation. All the same, the association did not finally value Brown's activity as a seed-collector. In the spring of 1866, the association refused to extend his three-year appointment, and noted that almost all the seeds from the previous year were "rotten . . . their vegetative power destroyed." With devastating directness, the secretary declared: "The results of the mission have proved so unsatisfactory that the greater part of the 3rd years subscription is in arrears and with nothing to distribute, we can get little in."

The committee in Victoria was somewhat more appreciative. There was even talk of a dinner in honour of the returning explorers, but Brown declined the proposal. "Money is scarce," he prudently noted in his journal. He was, however, interested in the Government Financial Estimates in January 1865, since $1,500 was listed there as a reward for the gold discovery on the Leech River. An honorary commander on the expedition itself, Brown had not received support from Edinburgh during the winter, and he noted that he was finally refused credit in Victoria and reduced to a diet of "Sherry and Eggs." Finally, in April 1865, the government bonus was divided among the explorers. "Got paid my quantum of $400," Brown observed. "Paid off all my Bills."

Brown clearly enjoyed the recognition that the Expedition brought him. On his twenty-third birthday (23 March, 1865), he noted with some complacency: "Though I have not done one tittle of what I might have done yet when compared with some of my College Contemporaries this is not so bad — a colonial fame at 23."

This fame is reflected in the regular press coverage given to Brown's subsequent movements throughout the Northwest. In the spring of 1865, for example, the *Colonist* noted that he was about to set out for southern Oregon. "The doctor possesses indomitable energy," it remarked, "and is well inured to exposure" (17 May 1865). In the fall, the same journal welcomed Brown on his return — "with large and valuable collections from Oregon, Idaho, and California" (16 October). The following spring, Brown travelled to the tip of Vancouver Island ("residing with the Indians on Koskeemo Sound for some time") and to the Queen Charlotte Islands. Finally, in August 1866, he attempted an ascent of Mount Baker, with the painter E.T. Coleman, but, as the *Colonist* reported, hostile Indians "declined to let them proceed." When Brown left for Britain immediately after this failure, the *Colonist* provided a glowing tribute:

> We shall be very sorry to part with the Doctor, not alone for the selfish reason that he is good for numerous interesting news items, so long as he remains in the country; but because the Colony will lose a valuable man, who has done more towards exploring its unknown regions, unfolding its natural

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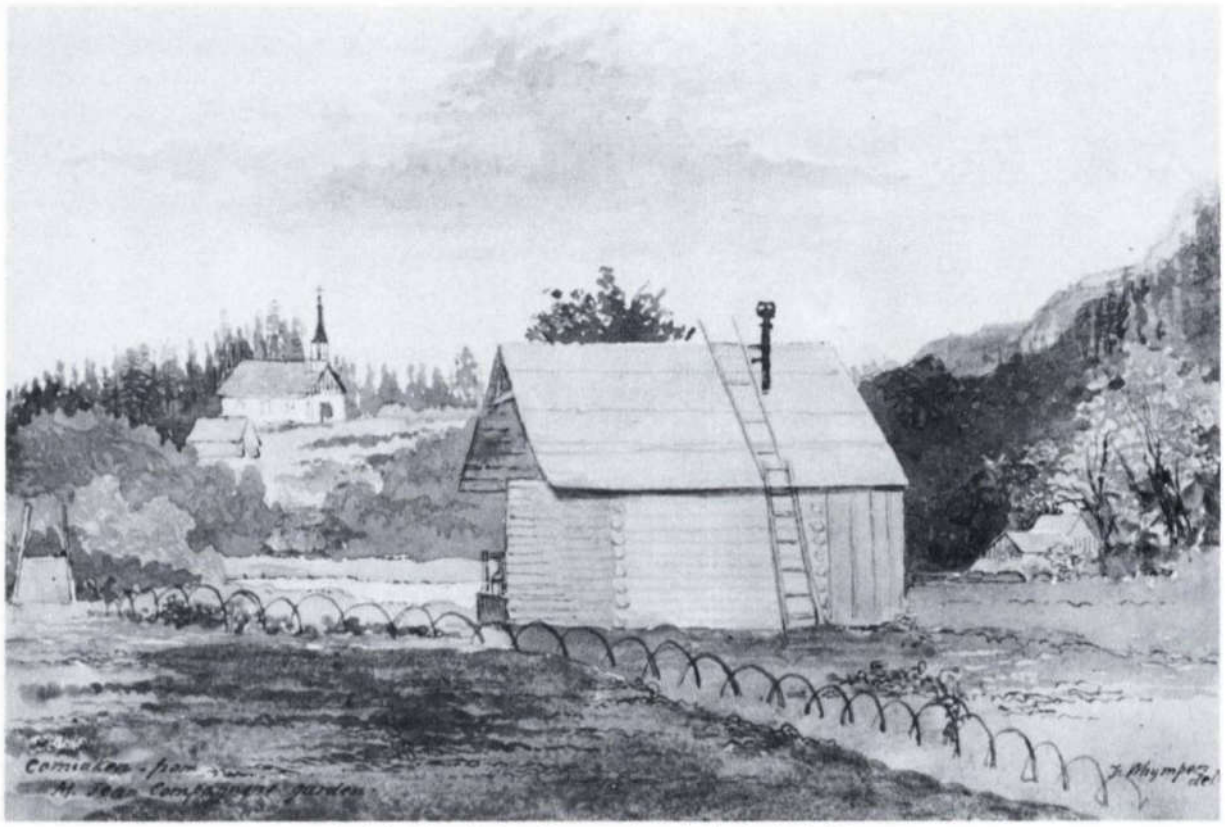


Comiaken from M. Jean Compagnon's garden by Frederick Whymper.

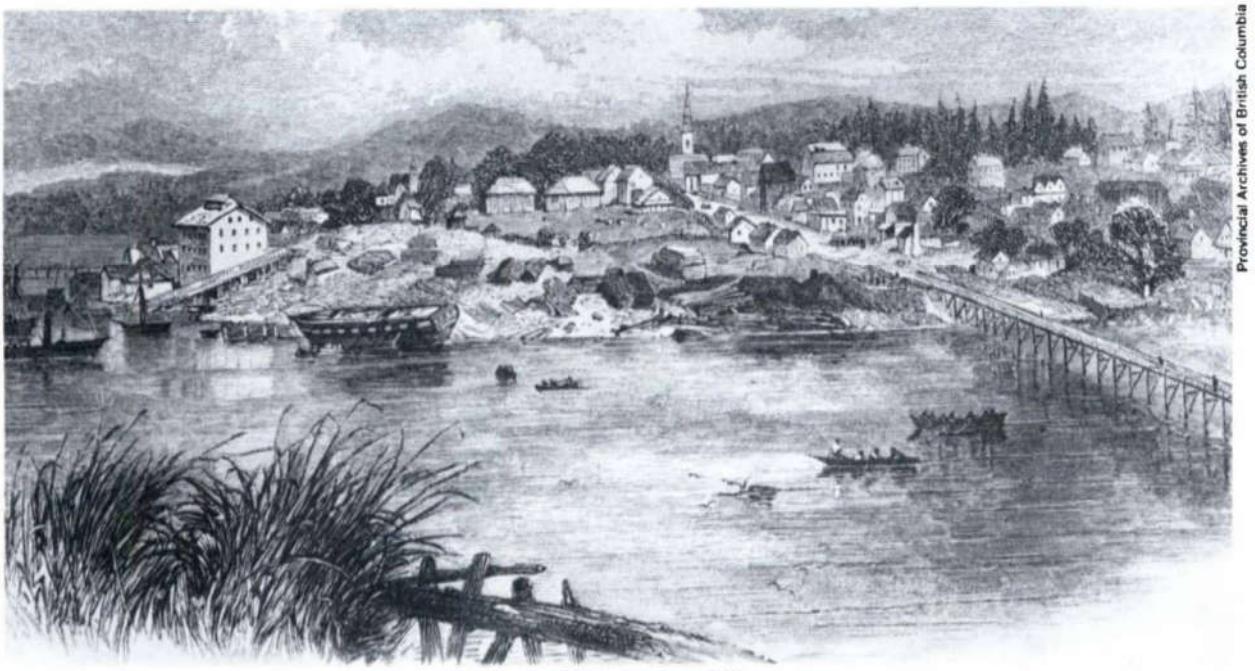
resources, and drawing attention to the latent wealth of the Island, than any other man in it; and because society will lose an affable and intelligent gentleman. (2 August 1866)

After so many difficulties and disappointments, such tributes must have been welcome — but the question remains: what did Brown's primary venture — the Expedition of 1864 — actually achieve?

The foundation of Leechtown was undoubtedly the most immediate result. At the conclusion of the expedition, Brown learned from the Victoria postmaster that an estimated $100,000 in gold had been taken from the area and that about 400 men were still active there. Throughout the winter, work continued sporadically at the diggings, and in his journal for 2 January 1865, Brown observed: "the general cry is 'What would the town have been without Leech River.' " Shortly before returning to Britain in 1866, Brown visited the area and found it "a settled district with embryo towns, good trails, [and] stores.". . . "I slept in a Hotel of two stories," he noted, "where I was entertained with a sumptuous dinner." However, Brown had also to admit that the gold was "very scattered," and by this time discoveries at Big Bend had attracted the floating population of miners.

Brown was probably more disappointed that difficult transportation made it unfeasible to mine coal on the Brown River. He had, however, always stressed that the exploration was essentially a fact-finding mission. On being appointed commander, he had declared to the committee: "I neither promise prairies, nor mines, nor yet a Goshen — a land flowing with milk & honey — but *I will try.* We are searching for truth & that we will find."

Finally, then, Brown's major achievement is his drawing attention to previously undescribed regions of Vancouver Island in publications that extended over the following thirty years. Following his official report of 1865, his *Memoir on the Geography of the Interior of Vancouver Island* appeared in a German translation in Petermann's *Mittheilungen* (1869), together with a map which rendered the island's southern interior in unprecedented detail. (This *Memoir* has not been published in English, but in recognition of its value, Brown was awarded a doctorate by the University of Rostock, and so the title that had been loosely applied to him for some years was made legitimate.) Subsequently, Brown published accounts of different sections of the expedition in such works of popular education as *Illustrated Travels* (1869-75) and *The Countries of the*



Provincial Archives of British Columbia

A view of Victoria, about 1860.

World (1876-81). Regrettably, he never published the single, extended narrative which he had earlier assumed would be "a paying concern". On arriving back in Britain, he discovered that the market was glutted with accounts of the Northwest.

In other ways, Brown was also to be disappointed. He attempted to establish himself as a botanist and applied for Chairs at the Royal College of Science for Ireland in 1868 and Edinburgh University in 1873, but he was not successful. Following his marriage in 1875, he therefore took up journalism in London and was at the time of his death in 1895 at the age of fifty-three a leader writer for the *Standard*.

Brown's youthful energy seems to have been replaced in later life by an obsession with work. It is noted in an obituary: "He never learned to play . . . His fingers itched to hold the pen, to handle a book." Amid this anxious activity, it is perhaps understandable that he should have looked back nostalgically on his years in the Northwest.

A year before his death C.F. Newcombe wrote to him asking for copies of his publications on British Columbia. Brown replied that he had not kept copies and that "other lands" had subsequently claimed his attention. All the same, he clearly found pleasure in recollection. "There was a time," he responded, "when everything about British Columbia interested me. I passed in that region some of the most instructive years of my early manhood." Turning momentarily from the demands of London journalism, he recalled how life in Victoria had "moved in a pleasantly unexciting manner."

It seems fitting then that Brown's final publication — an edition of *The Adventures of John Jewitt* — should have been concerned with Vancouver Island. Published the year after Brown's death, the edition has an introduction in which Brown wrote of his own journeys "along the western shores of Vancouver Island . . . and into the still little known, but at that time almost entirely unexplored interior." There is no hint here of his difficult relations with his sponsors, of any dissension within the exploration party, or of problems employing Indian guides. Instead, he recalled the camaraderie of the exploration party and wrote in detail of the fascination of Indian life. In retrospect, it is poignant that Brown should have provided the introduction as "a slight contribution to the meagre chronicles of a dying race." Close to death himself, Brown seems content to look back on years that had seemed so full of promise. ◆

John Hayman, a member of the Department of English, University of Victoria, plans to publish a book on Robert Brown.

VANCOUVER'S REAL ESTATE TREE

By Betty C. Keller

One of the most photographed trees in the history of Vancouver crashed to the ground exactly one hundred years ago — before a single photograph of it had been taken. A Douglas fir that had been broken off three hundred and ten feet above the ground, it stood just south of Georgia Street, halfway between Granville and Seymour where the Vancouver Centre now stands. When felled, it lay due north and south, right across the corner of the future site of the Hudson's Bay store and across Granville Street so that its topmost branches rested where the Pacific Centre's display windows now face the street.

The man who brought it to the ground on 12 February 1886, was a contractor named Alex Russell who had been hired by the CPR to log off the big timber on the company's terminal city townsite. This site included all the land lying between the original Gastown settlement in the East End and the "Three Greenhorns" West End pre-emption. The CPR had already chosen the highest point of land — the southwest corner of Granville and Georgia — for their Hotel Vancouver, and real estate speculators were scrambling for the lots adjacent to it. By the beginning of 1886 the company was definitely committed to bringing the railway to Vancouver, and Russell was ordered to begin clearing.

But in spite of the fact that the big fir towered over all the giants around it, no one thought it exceptional enough to photograph it while it was standing. It was only after it lay on the ground that Russell decided to have his picture taken beside it, rather like a successful elephant hunter with his prize. After that, all the leaders of the community trooped off to the clearing site to have their pictures taken beside the log as "souvenirs" to send back to relatives in the east.

Lachlan Hamilton, the CPR land commissioner who surveyed the Granville Street lots, came back after the tree was felled and jotted down a few statistics in his field survey book. "On stump," he wrote, "eleven feet eight inches (in diameter). Thirty feet from ground, eight feet two inches. Two hundred ten feet from ground, three feet ten inches."

The tree was bucked into forty foot lengths so that it could be dragged down to the inlet later that spring. In the meantime, a 20-year-old named Harry Torkington Devine arrived in Vancouver in the last week of April 1886 to set up a branch studio for J.A. Brock, photographer, of Brandon, Manitoba. Devine had been apprenticed to Brock but had decided to come west when his father, a former Manchester bookkeeper, had tired of the dubious delights of Manitoba homesteading and made plans to head for the coast. Brock seized the opportunity to expand his business, intending to establish the young man in Victoria in a smart salon catering to the Establishment, but the Devines found Vancouver more exciting and set up shop side by side on Cordova Street, the father as an accountant and auditor, the son as a photographer.

The younger Devine fell in love with the west coast's scenery, especially its huge trees; consequently all the remaining photos of the Big Tree were products of his camera. He had an extraordinarily fine sense of composition and a first rate sense of fun. One of his photos shows the second section of the log lying amid a jumble of smaller logs and debris (in the middle of Georgia). On top of the log stands J. W. Horne, arms akimbo, a double-bitted axe embedded in the wood beside him — a fine example of a hard working labourer, except that Horne was a real estate speculator. He had followed the CPR west, investing in town lots in each little settlement along the line, and "buying up mortgages at little more than half their face value." The *Brandon Mail*, interviewing him in August 1886 on his reasons for abandoning the prairies for Vancouver, reported his "unbounded confidence" in the new town was based on the fact that "a capitalist can readily double his money in Vancouver in one year!"

To prove his claim, he sent prairie friends a copy of the second photo Devine took of him, posed within the hollowed out butt cut of the Big Tree, selling lots to a gaggle of pioneer gentlemen, all of them completely sober-faced, as if they customarily transacted their business inside old logs. Both of the Horne pictures

Harry T. Devine (above) took the famous picture of the "real estate tree" (opposite page) sometime between 16 May and 28 May 1886. Real estate speculator J. Wellington Horne points to a map of the lots for sale flanked by Doctors Port and Hendrickson. Also in the picture is J.M. Stiles (standing on top of log), a real estate speculator who left town on 28 May, one step ahead of the law.

J. Wellington Horne poses atop the big tree's second cut, late May 1886 watched by architect N.S. Hoffar. Others are unidentified.

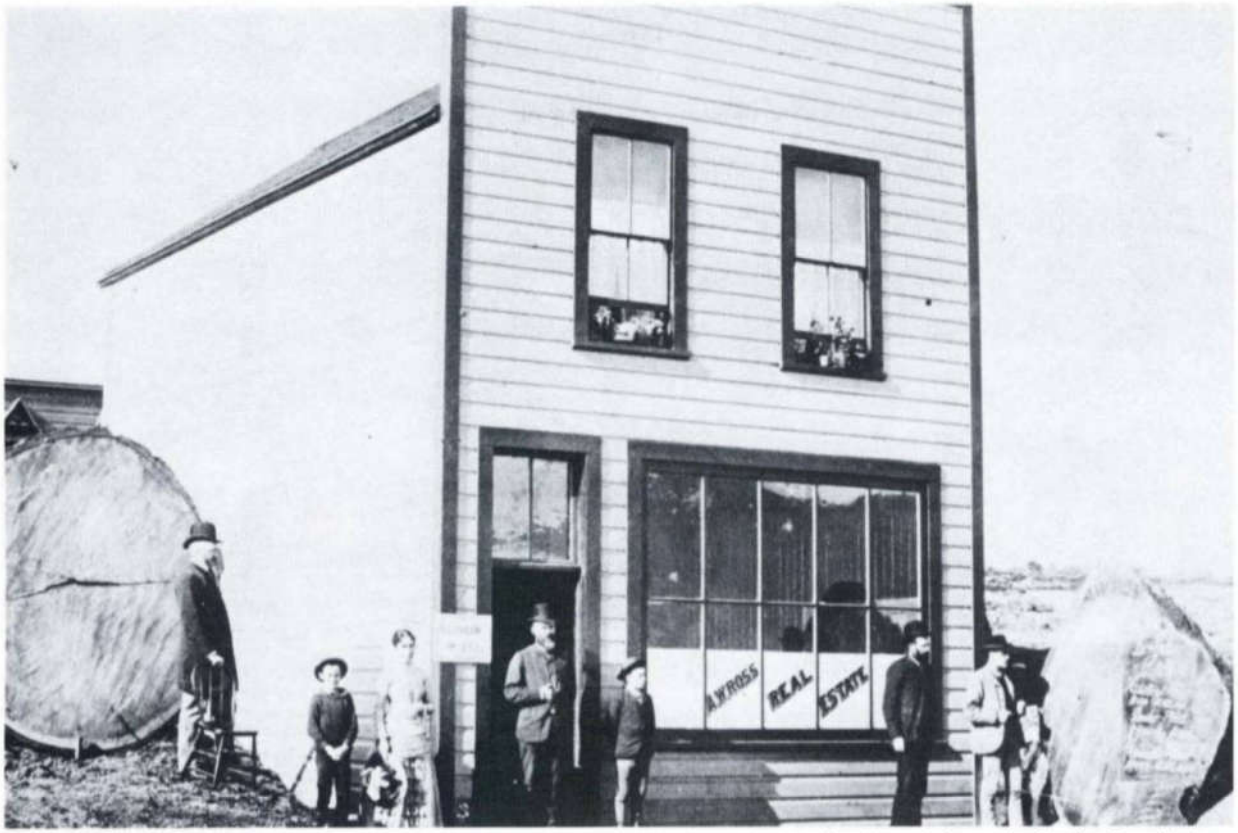
The modern Hudson's Bay Company store stands on the site across which the tree fell.

"A capitalist can readily double his money in Vancouver in one year."

— J.W. Horne, 1886

The Princess Louise Tree (opposite page) survived the fire but was later felled.

Princess Louise Tree
Vancouver June 12 1886



Prominent citizens pose beside the butt cut (top of page 34) in a picture by an unknown photographer. Man at left is said to be Alex Russell, the man who brought the tree down. Mr. and Mrs. Ben Chase pose (bottom, page 34) beside the burned-out stump. Devine took the shot from the top of the butt cut. The picture above shows a round from the great tree (left) that A.W. Ross set up outside his real estate office in August 1886.

were taken in the latter half of May 1886 and advertised for sale in the 6 June edition of the Vancouver *News-Advertiser* as splendid souvenirs to show the "picturesque" points of interest in the city.

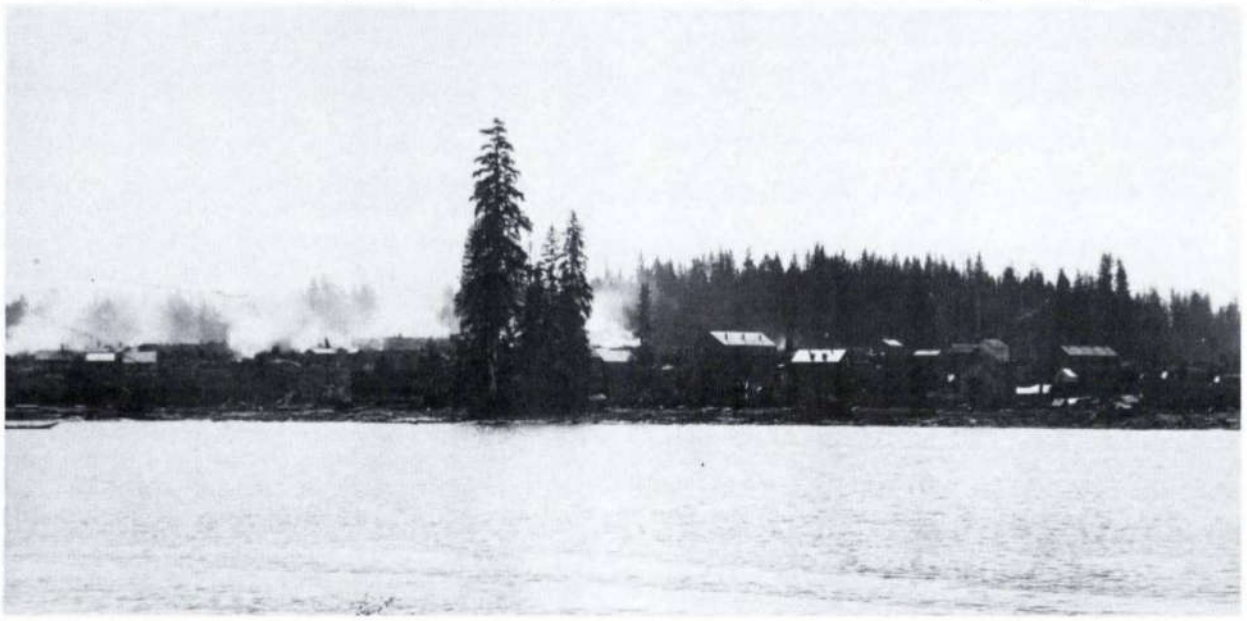
The section of the tree in which Horne had set up "shop" is the same one that Vancouver's elite had posed beside a few months earlier, but it had undergone some changes. Probably because it had a modest core of butt rot, the contractor had chosen to burn the butt cut rather than attempt to salvage its sound wood for lumber. The stump, which had to be removed anyway before construction could begin, and the butt cut were therefore packed with saltpetre and set on fire in late April. But it turned wet in the last week of that month and poured every day till 16 May, putting out the fire and thereby providing a setting for the real estate gag shot.

About two weeks after that picture was taken, the city of Vancouver burned to the ground, and the photographer's attention was diverted to recording the devastation and the rebuilding process. It was late that summer before he returned to photograph the Big Tree again. Although the fire had burned a wide path from False Creek to Burrard Inlet, the wind had prevented it from reaching Georgia and Granville, so that both the butt cut and the stump remained exactly as they had been in late May. But while the setting was the same, Devine's pictures from this later period had lost their brash boom-town look and their humour; ladies and gentlemen pose sedately beside the stump as if in their drawing rooms, apparently unaware of the incongruity. The photo of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Grassie of Grassie Jewellers taken at either Christmas 1886 or the first week of February 1887 (the two occasions when snow fell that winter) was probably the last time the shutter clicked on the stump's remains before it was cleared away.

But this wasn't the end of the Big Tree's history. The forty-foot lengths had been skidded down to the inlet and floated along the waterfront to the Hastings Sawmill at the foot of Dunlevy Street. While the only way that most modern mills, designed to handle second growth timber, could tackle such a giant would be by first splitting it lengthwise, the early mills like the Hastings and the Moodyville Mill across the inlet were built to accommodate such huge logs easily. Within the mill, several rounds were cut from the butt end of the Big Tree's second section and reserved before it

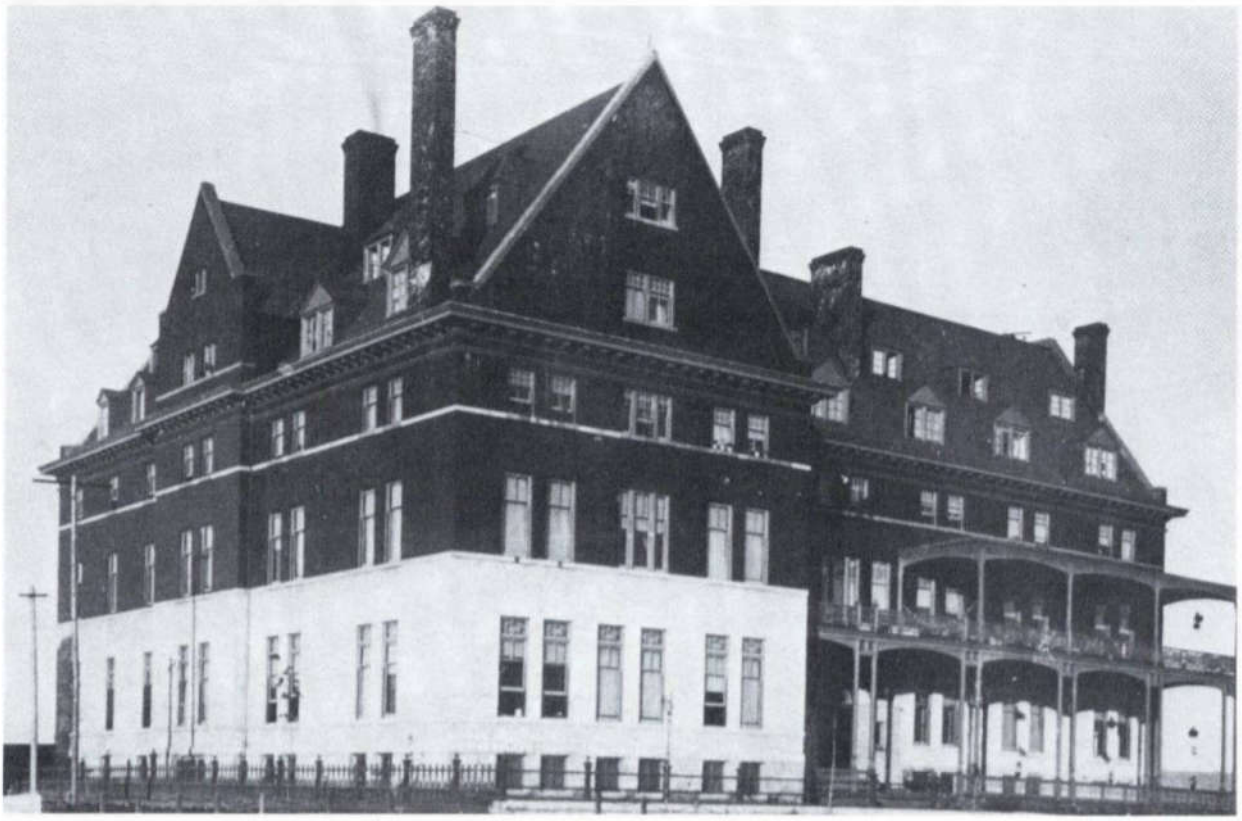
The famous maple tree at the Water and Carrall Street corner was photographed by Devine shortly before the tree and the buildings around it were destroyed in the great fire. All photographs from the City Archives, Vancouver.

The Princess Louise Tree as it looked from the water. A pall of smoke from clearing fires hovers over the homes of the Hastings Mill workers.



City Archives, Vancouver

North Arm Road (South Granville Street), looking south, 1895.



The first Hotel Vancouver, built by the CPR in 1887 near the place where the great tree fell.

was processed into lumber to be loaded aboard the waiting sailing ships and exported to Europe.

Two of the reserved rounds were transferred to the grounds of the new CPR office building which housed the Bank of British Columbia, the railway's general offices and the railway station. The latter was not yet in use as the CPR did not reach Vancouver until May 1887. A. W. Ross, another Vancouver real estate man, got into the Big Tree act by buying one of the rounds to display outside his Hastings Street office. (Ross advertised lots on Hastings or Granville for $1,000 to $2,000; Pender Street lots went for $750 to $1,200.)

Another section was shipped via CPR from Port Moody on 28 August 1886, to be exhibited in Toronto at the Industrial Exhibition. From there, early the following year, it was sent to London to be displayed at the Crystal Palace in honor of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations. What happened to it after that is not recorded.

Only three other Vancouver trees have received comparable attention from photographers. The maple tree at the corner of Water and Carrall Streets was consumed by the fire of June 1886, but not before Devine had photographed it from every possible angle. According to the *News-Advertiser* he even climbed the ten foot stump opposite Templeton and Northcott's Grocery to get another shot of it three days before the fire.

The Princess Louise Tree on the waterfront just east of Main Street survived the fire, but its bark was blackened and the trees around it vanished in the flames. However, since the tree had been named for Princess Louise after she had taken a fancy to it on her visit to the city in the fall of 1882 — her husband, the Marquis of Lorne, was Governor-General at the time — and because she had demanded that it be left untouched as the city grew around it, the city fathers made an effort to preserve the tree in spite of the fire damage. Unfortunately, its roots had been weakened and it had to be felled on 27 January 1887.

Of the third famous tree, the hollow cedar in Stanley Park, little is known of it before it gained renown as a background for family photographs. Today it still intrigues both Vancouverites and tourists. Held together at the top with steel rods, its rotting flanks acting as host for a number of smaller, living trees, it is the last sad relic of the city's noble line of giants. ◆

Betty C. Keller, who lives in Sechelt, British Columbia, has written biographies of Pauline Johnson and Ernest Thompson Seton. She is the grandchild of Harry Torkington Devine.

Exploring for the Telegraph In British Columbia 1865-1866

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By Gerard Chapman

By 1861 a tenuous telegraph line had been strung across the prairies and deserts of the western United States to San Francisco. After the Civil War, most of that country's cities were linked by a network of wires, but it still took from ten days to two weeks for news to travel across the Atlantic Ocean between North America, Great Britain and continental Europe.

Cyrus W. Field, in the interval 1857-1858, had made three attempts to lay a submarine telegraph line — a cable — between North America and Europe; for three weeks the line worked, then it fell dead. The general attitude was that the scheme was impracticable and that an overland telegraph via Bering Strait could link the continents.

Perry McDonough Collins, formerly United States consular agent at Nikolaevsk, Siberia, and a promoter, had done the necessary spade work to enlist the co-operation of Russian authorities to permit construction in Siberia and Russian America [Alaska]; the Russians also agreed to extend their wires eastward to link up with the projected line.

The Western Union Telegraph Co. took over the project in 1864 and assigned Col. Charles S. Bulkley as chief engineer. He put four parties in the field, and it is with one of these that we are here concerned. It sailed from San Francisco on 17 May 1865 in charge of Franklin L. Pope and began its exploration upon landing at New Westminster, B.C.

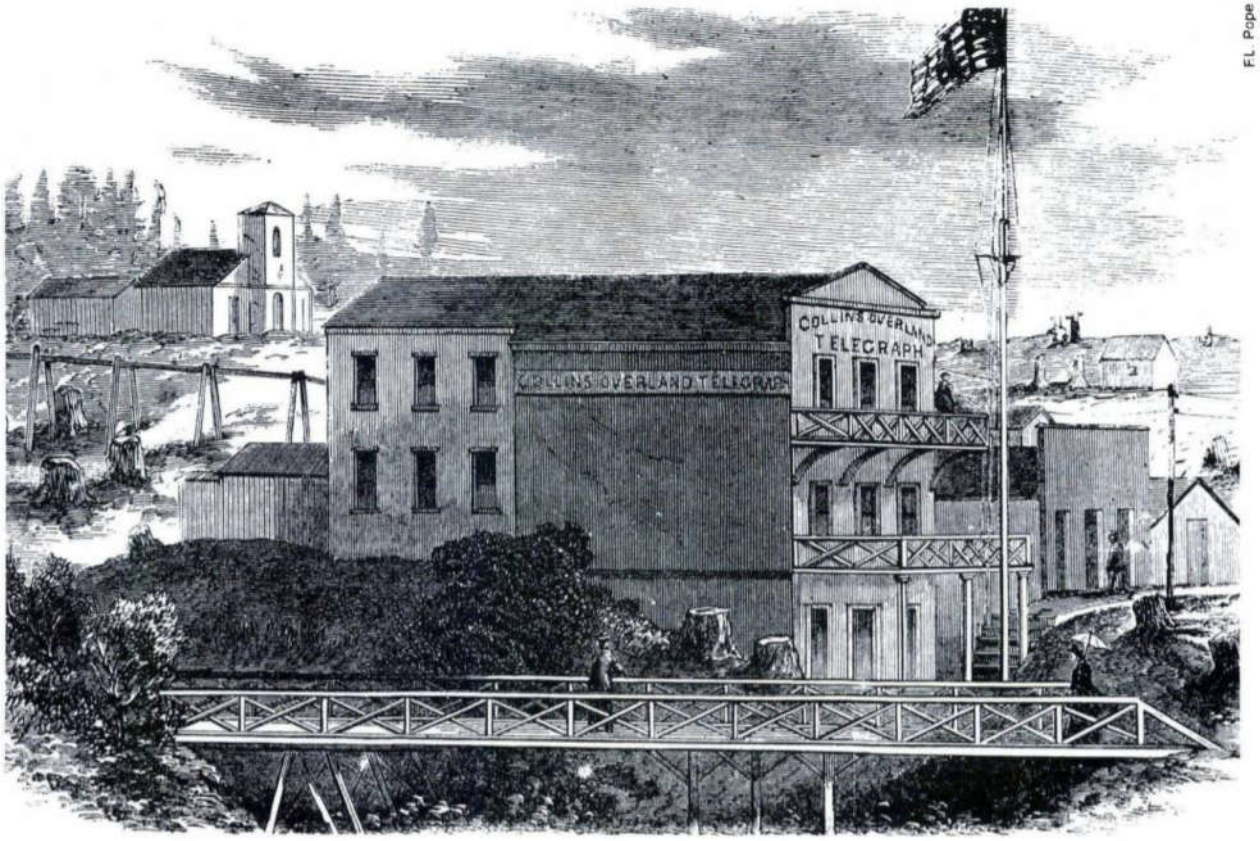
Franklin Leonard Pope was born 2 December 1840 in Great Barrington, Berkshire County, Massachusetts and early displayed an interest in geography, mechanical pursuits and drawing. At the age of 17 he became a telegraph operator when a line reached his home town and went on to become one of the earliest practicing electrical engineers for the American Telegraph Co.

Finding his health seriously impaired in 1864, and desiring outdoor, physical work, he joined the Russo-American Telegraph Co. to become the leader of one of its surveying parties.

A preliminary investigation had disclosed the fact that the country over which the proposed telegraph line was to be erected, from Fort St. James on the upper waters of the Fraser River in British Columbia to Bering Strait, a distance of 1,500 to 2,000 miles, was an absolute *terra incognita*, no known exploration of it having been made, and the existing maps, being purely conjectural, were of little use. It was therefore necessary that a preliminary exploration and survey of the country should be made.

That segment was but one of several to string a telegraph line north from San Francisco into Canada to New Westminster; from there north and west through the Yukon Territory and Russian America, and skirting Norton Sound, reach the Strait. There, a 39-mile underwater cable would convey the line to Siberia; another 1,800 miles across the steppes to the mouth of the Amur River would bring the line to a connection with the wire being extended from St. Petersburg; altogether it involved 5,000 miles of construction, much of it under rigorous conditions of weather and terrain.

Great Barrington Historical Society



F.L. Pope

"This immense enterprise which is to connect America with Europe . . . is being pushed forward with the utmost urgency . . ."
Telegraph office, New Westminster — Harper's Weekly, 12 August 1865.

In *The Berkshire Courier* (the weekly newspaper of South Berkshire County, which still exists) of 21 January 1880 George Kirby Holmes described the situation that had confronted the surveying parties; the following is a paraphrase of his narrative.

In the middle 1860s all that was definitely known of the vast region between the Coast Range and the Rocky Mountains, extending from the 55th parallel of latitude to the Arctic Ocean, was due to the enterprise of the Hudson's Bay Company. HBC explorers and traders had crossed the Rocky Mountains at Rat River portage near the confluence of the Mackenzie River with the Arctic Ocean and descended the Porcupine to its junction with a large river called the Yukon where at a point almost under the Arctic Circle they had established a trading post known as Fort Yukon. There was reason for the conjecture, which later proved to be correct, that the Yukon was identical with the Kvitchpak, a great river flowing into the Bering Sea, which had been explored for some distance from its mouth by the Russians. Behind Sitka, a large river called the Stikine flows into the Alexander Archipelago, and several years before this river had been ascended for a hundred miles by gold seekers until they were stopped by an awesome canyon, above the lower mouth of which no explorer had ever penetrated.

A study of the geographical features of the region seemed to render it probable, so far as then known, that the sources of the Fraser, the Stikine, the Mackenzie and the Yukon Rivers might be found in the elevated region between the 55th and 60th degrees of latitude. Mr. Pope suggested to Col. Bulkley that one exploring party might penetrate the country from the north by way of the Yukon/Kvitchpak to the headwaters of the Stikine and thence to the Pacific by the valley of that river and the other party enter from the south by the Fraser River, and then go over to and down the Stikine, which would give both parties the advantage of boat transportation for their stores a large part of the way. This plan was adopted and two parties formed, the Yukon party being in command of Major Robert Kennicott, a celebrated naturalist and explorer, and the Fraser party in command of Mr. Pope.

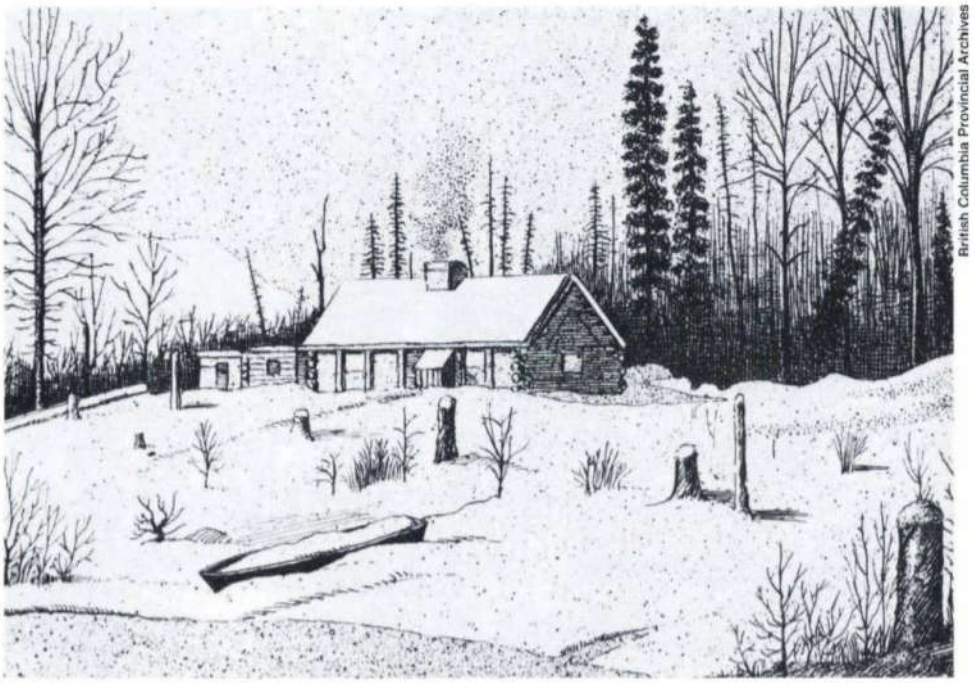
The exploration of an unknown country was something new to Franklin Pope, but he had a love for the

Franklin L. Pope

"The City of New Westminster is pleasantly situated on the north bank of the Frazer [sic], about fifteen miles from its mouth."
Drawing by F.L. Pope — Harper's Weekly, 12 August 1865.

work and started on the northward journey at once, having procured some surveying and astronomical instruments and a copy of Nathaniel Bowditch's *American Practical Navigator* which he studied as he travelled. He and his companions arrived at Quesnel, the farthest settlement in British Columbia, on 14 July 1865, and from there went overland with a pack train of thirty mules to Fort St. James. From there they conveyed in boats a large quantity of stores and provisions to Lake Tatla, a little-known lake at the head of the northwestern branch of the Fraser, where they built a log house — since known as Bulkley House — over a hundred miles from the nearest human habitation, and passed the greater part of the winter of 1865 in a dense wilderness where the snow was seven feet deep and the spirit thermometer frequently indicated fifty degrees below zero.

On the 22nd of February Pope took one trustworthy companion and two Indians and set out on snowshoes with a sledge drawn by dogs in search of the source of the Stikine. For strangers it was a daring undertaking to push through at least 600 miles of unknown, mountainous wilderness in the depth of a northern winter and with no guide but a compass. Seventy days after their departure from Lake Tatla they reached the mouth of the Stikine without serious accident, but not without suffering many hardships and difficulties. For the greater part of the last half of the trip they lived on a handful of pemmican a day. Every night their bivouac was in the snow, with no roof above them but the northern sky. They crossed the mountains and came upon the Stikine at its very source and followed it as best they could from there to the sea. On their way they passed through the terrible canyon previously



Bulkley House, a sketch based on a watercolour by F.L. Pope.

mentioned, rivaling, if not surpassing, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado: an earthquake river chasm nearly a hundred miles in length, in some places more than two thousand feet deep, and only a few feet wide, its walls of basaltic formation wrought in a thousand fantastic forms of cyclopean architecture. Sometimes they travelled on the thick ice at the bottom of the canyon which was in perpetual twilight, then, when the violence of the current prevented the formation of ice, they climbed over the precipitous walls, drawing up and letting down the sledge and dogs, one by one, with a rope, at the risk of losing their lives from a misstep. They finally arrived at the long-abandoned camp of the gold seekers, at the mouth of the canyon, only to confront a new danger, that of starvation, from which they were rescued by a band of wandering Indians who gave them a quantity of dried salmon. Here they built a boat and with the spring breakup floated down the Stikine to the sea.

In the bay at the mouth of the river they chanced upon a trading vessel, which landed them at Victoria after an absence of over a year.

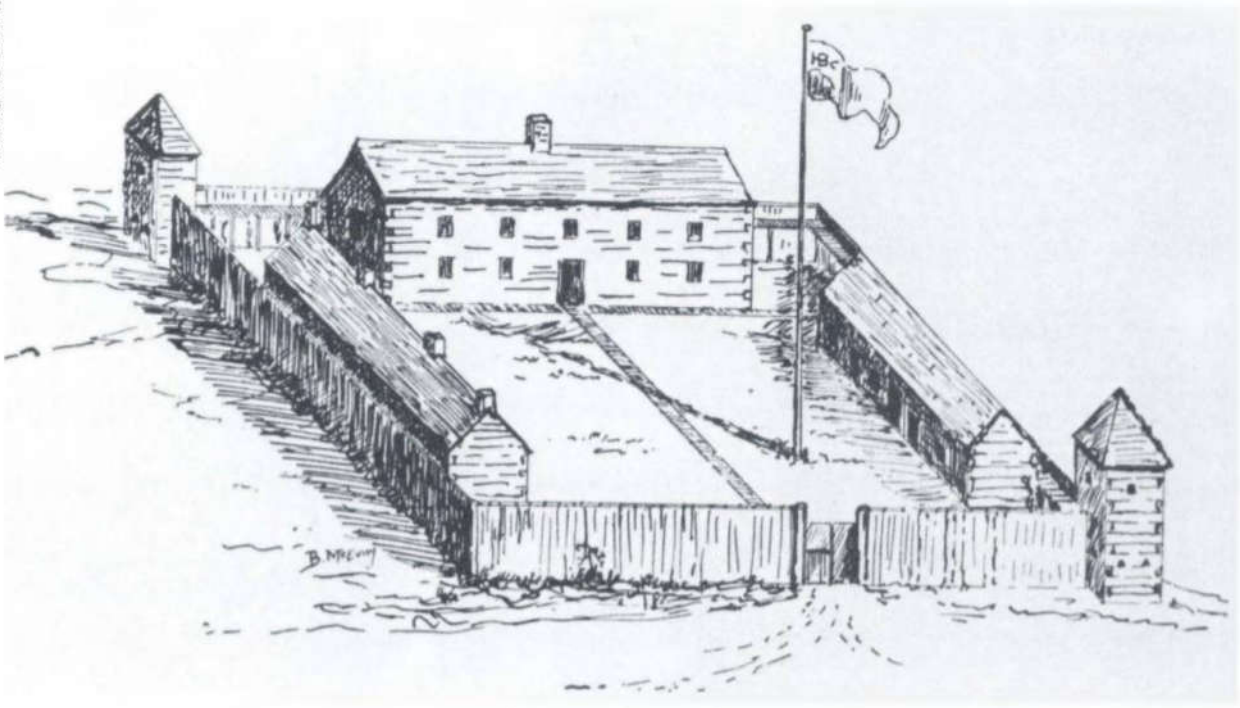
During part of the trip Franklin Pope had been accompanied by a brother, Ralph Wainwright Pope (1844-1929), who was also involved in telegraphy. Ralph was quartermaster for the overland telegraph project, wintered at Quesnel and returned to the U.S. in the spring of 1866.

There was a third brother, Henry William Pope (1848-1916) to whom, at home in Great Barrington, the explorer Franklin Leonard Pope wrote two long letters setting forth his experiences in penetrating the winter wilderness of British Columbia.

The first, dated 7 November 1865, was printed in *The Berkshire Courier* of 8 March 1866. It was sent from Bulkley House, Lake Tatla, British Columbia.

> Dear Brother — Your letter of July came duly to hand a day or two since, and was gladly received, you may believe. Although our nearest Post Office is over 400 miles, and only two houses between here and there, our letters come through with considerable regularity. A large mail for myself and party from San Francisco was lost in the wreck of the *Brother Jonathan* as well as two operators coming to New Westminster. We usually send our mails by some stray Indian going through the wilderness, who is pretty sure to deliver them safely, for he knows he will get a liberal "potlatch" of tobacco.
>
> We are in winter quarters now, although the season 'haint set in yet for good and the lake is not yet frozen in. There is some snow on the ground, and any quantity of it in the mountains in all directions.
>
> Our station "Bulkley House" is at the north end of Lake Tatla, 1,600 miles from San Francisco. Nearest houses are Fort Connolly 60 miles north and Fort St. James 120 miles south. There are hardly any Indians in the country. Once a month or so a stray one happens along, but doesn't stop long.
>
> Lake Tatla is about 60 miles long, and has a tremendous range of mountain on each side of it. The country around the house is well timbered and level, and the view from the front door extends 30 miles

Hudson's Bay Company



Fort St. James, mid-nineteenth century.

down the lake. It is a beautiful place. Our house is about as large as the kitchen part of the house at home, and has two rooms, the office and the kitchen, each with a fireplace. I think that the prospects are we shall have pretty cold weather here, and short days this winter, as it is not light here mornings till 8 o'clock now, and is dark a few minutes after four. In midwinter I don't imagine we shall see very much of the sun. I have seven men here with me, for the winter, and plenty of provisions to last until next June. I am sure we shall have a very pleasant winter.

I have just returned from an exploring expedition north to Fort Connolly, which was no small job, I can tell you. It is about 60 miles from here and two men went with me. We had to carry our blankets, provisions, axes, frying pans, guns, and fifty other traps on our backs, and the whole forest from here to there has been burnt and has all blown down, and the logs are piled up "criss-cross" in every direction several feet high, like a pile of matches thrown on the floor! It was nice work climbing over 60 miles of that stuff with the load we had. Then we had to wade a river nearly twice as large as the Housatonic, about daylight one morning, with the ice running down. That was snug and comfortable! To add to the beauties of the situation, we got snowed in up in the mountains, and had to stay there 'till all our "grub" was eaten up, and when we finally got out had to travel all the way back (60 miles again) with nothing for the three of us to eat except two dried woodchucks and four dried fish. We had to scramble over the logs all day, and sit down at night and eat our piece of dried woodchuck about as big as a plug of tobacco, and a good deal tougher than gutta percha, with first rate appetites. Oh yes, and we had tea too, made it out of a plant that grows here in the swamp, which makes first rate tea. We used to pick that and boil it in our tin cups. We had no end of fun on the trip though. One thing astonished me; and that was to see a lot of Indian children running around in the snow naked and snow-balling each other, never seeming to care about the cold, when the north wind blew enough to nip your nose off. This was the wigwam where we got the dried woodchucks.

Probably you folks at home would be interested to know how we live and what we live on here, and I can assure you that there's many a hotel in the eastern land not so well kept as Bulkley House. I have a cook who takes care of the house, chops the wood and runs the establishment. We have plenty of good bread, bacon, beans and dried salmon, tea, coffee, chocolate and sugar, also dried apples and rice, once or twice a week. When we are on a trip we live on bread and bacon, with tea and sugar. We get a good many ducks and partridges, and some fresh fish once in a while. Fresh woodchucks are excellent and we have them often. I have got to be about as good a cook as anybody now, having to look out for myself on our exploring tours.

Bridge built by Indians over the Bulkley River at Hagwilget using wire abandoned when the Overland Telegraph project was suspended.

I can write you very little news from here, as everything goes on exactly the same from day to day. I am running the survey line for the telegraph, for which I make occasional excursions, and the men follow the line and cut a road. I have sent back the largest portion of my men, so as to not eat me out of house and home. The health of myself and entire party is excellent. I expect now to get away from here next June and return home overland in the fall. I wish you would write me all you can find out about the United States company, and how they are getting on. I get no eastern papers whatever. Have seen but one [Springfield] Republican and not a single Courier since leaving San Francisco last May. I must depend on your letters for [Great] Barrington news.

I have nothing more to write at present, it will be nearly three months before I can send out another mail, unless an Indian happens along which is not likely this season of the year. Please give my regards to all inquiring friends. Ralph is well. I suppose you hear from him often as he has a Post Office and a telegraph office at his station.

Your brother,
Frank

It was not until the following spring that Franklin Pope wrote again to his brother Henry. The letter was dated at New Westminster, B.C., 15 June 1866, and appeared in *The Courier* of 30 August 1866.

You have, doubtless, received from your regular correspondent, accompanying our exploring party, full details of our progress during the last year, and of our life in winter quarters at Lake Tatla. I will, therefore, give you a sketch of the trip of the Stikine exploring party, which left Lake Tatla on the 19th of February, with the intention of making its way from thence to the upper waters of the Stikine River — a country which has hitherto been a *terra incognita* even to the adventurous explorers of the Hudson['s] Bay Company. This little party was composed of two white men — your correspondent and Mr. George Blenkinsop, of Victoria — and two Indians, to assist in cutting firewood and carrying the provisions. We were furthermore provided with a sledge and team of four dogs, which, when we set out, carried four hundred pounds of provisions and other necessary articles. Each of us was also furnished with a pair of snowshoes, without which one could not move ten rods from home, in the deep snows of this northern climate. Thus equipped, we set out on our journey into the unknown wilderness, with no guide but the compass and the certainty that the River Stikine lay at an unknown distance to the northwest.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the weather during the first month, indeed, during the whole of our journey. Day after day a bright sun shone from

a blue and cloudless sky, as we pursued our way through the broad, level valley leading to the northwest from Lake Tatla. Our greatest difficulty was caused by the depth and more especially the lightness of the snow, in which sometimes the dogs would struggle for an entire day, with merely their heads above the surface, we drawing the loads ourselves, and sometimes even carrying the dogs on our backs when they were too much exhausted to move. For many days we thus laboriously worked our way up the valley of the Skeena, making an advance of only three or four miles per day, with the utmost labor and difficulty. The snow in many parts of this valley was ten feet in depth.

On the 23rd of March we reached the head of Skeena River, in a beautiful prairie about fifteen miles in length, and surrounded by lofty, snow-clad mountains. Here we were obliged to kill one of the dogs, who was worn out with the severe labor, and unable to keep up with us. Matters thus far had been anything but encouraging. After a month of protracted and very exhausting labor we had accomplished but one hundred and fifty miles, and our dogs were all nearly "used-up," and in a fair way to soon follow the one just killed, which would leave us without transportation for our provisions in the heart of an interminable wilderness. We two, excluding the Indians, who, of course, wanted to return, held a council of war, at which it was unanimously decided to "go ahead." So we pushed forward, and from that moment circumstances favored our enterprise. The snow became firm under our feet, and the three dogs trotted along merrily with their load over its smooth, hard surface. We were now following a stream which I knew from the nature of the country must be a tributary of the Stikine, and, indeed, it finally proved to be the identical river itself. So we pushed on as rapidly as possible, and about the 15th of April came upon the encampment of an Indian family, who had, fortunately, just killed a reindeer, and were consequently flush of provisions. They treated us with the utmost hospitality, and we gladly accepted their invitation to remain a day or two, and feast ourselves and our half-starved dogs. So we lay on the fragrant bed of spruce boughs in the Indian wigwam, enjoying the unaccustomed luxury of having plenty to eat and nothing to do. Our dusky hosts were continually cooking all kinds of strange-looking messes and inviting us to partake of them, which in accordance with Indian etiquette, we invariably did and asked no questions. At night we slept in the wigwam mixed up indiscriminately with the whole family — men, women, children, babes, and "cultus" dogs — seventeen humans and an indefinite number of curs, packed in a space of about fifteen feet square! However, the building, being constructed of fir boughs, was well ventilated, and we experienced no particular inconvenience.

The next morning we bade farewell to our hospitable entertainers, and harnessing our dogs, proceeded on our journey. In a day or two more we reached the Grand Can[y]on of the Stikine — a place which had been visited by the miners from the lower river in 1862. Avoiding the worst part of the canyon by an overland portage of forty miles, we entered the lower part of it by a side gulch at Salmon Creek. Language cannot describe the overpowering and terrible grandeur of the scene in many parts of this canyon. It may be described as an immense fissure, apparently caused by an earthquake, eighty miles in length, and running through a comparatively level country. This chasm, though in no place over two hundred or perhaps over three hundred feet wide, varies in depth from three hundred to two thousand feet! The walls are in most places perpendicular and wrought by the hand of Nature into the most curious forms and colors. Through the bottom of the canyon the river rushes furiously along, filling the whole space between the walls. The river had been frozen over several feet thick, but had broken away in the middle, leaving the firm ice still clinging to the rocky walls, and along this we made our way for thirty miles. In several places the ice was gone entirely, and we were obliged to clamber perilously up and along the perpendicular cliffs overhanging the water, hauling up the dogs and baggage with ropes. By great care and patience all these difficult and dangerous places were finally passed without accident, and to our great relief we came out from beneath the gloomy and frowning ledges of the canyon into the sunlight once more. Reaching Buck's Bar, the seat of the celebrated Stikine gold excitement of 1862, we built a boat — not a handsome boat, but still a boat — out of lumber left there by the miners, and waiting a day or two for the ice to run out of the river, we launched our craft, which was christened the *Clarette* and set out for the Pacific. The powerful current of the Stikine, aided by our efforts with the oars, in three days carried us over the one hundred and sixty miles intervening between Buck's Bar and the "great salt sea". Arriving at the mouth of the river we found the steamer *Otter* anchored in the offing, bound next day for Victoria. We rowed out to her and and went on board at once, glad enough to see the faces of white men once more, after our toilsome journey of seven hundred miles, which was accomplished in seventy days. The *Otter* coasted along toward Victoria, stopping to trade with the natives at various points on the way, and arrived at Victoria on the 24th of May, from whence we crossed over to this place.

British Columbia Provincial Archives

"The Otter coasted along toward Victoria, stopping to trade with the natives at various points on the way."

In summing up the general results of the exploration, I may observe that the country passed over is comparatively free from timber, and is unexpectedly favorable to the speedy construction of the telegraph line. The country has now been explored continuously to a distance of eleven hundred miles from New Westminster, with the most gratifying results. The wire is at present in operation nearly to Fort Fraser, which is about five hundred and ninety miles from this place.

F.L.P.

But the overland telegraph project was suddenly aborted; on 27 July 1866 the *Great Eastern*, laying Cyrus W. Field's Atlantic cable westward across the Atlantic Ocean, arrived in Newfoundland. Brought ashore, the cable was connected to the existing land lines, and this time it continued to function.

There was now no need for the Arctic telegraph line and the Western Union Telegraph Co. soon abandoned the attempt to link the two continents via Bering Strait. The crews returned to civilization, and the great coils of wire, tools and supplies in large measure were abandoned for the use of trappers and Indians. The four hundred miles of wire north of Quesnel was left in place, unused, but the line south of Quesnel remained in use. When the gold rush to the Yukon occurred in 1897-8, a telegraph line was strung along the right-of-way hacked through the wilderness three decades and more previously. Although the Russian-American project failed, it did help to open up the interior of British Columbia.

Franklin Leonard Pope became a patent attorney for Western Union and was involved in much patent litigation. He contributed numerous articles to the technical press, edited *The Telegrapher*, wrote the handbook *The Modern Practice of the Electric Telegraph*, and was president of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. He was a historian and cartographer as well, working on his native heath. He died by accidental electrocution in the basement of his home on 13 October 1895 while experimenting with transformers — an ironic end to an adventurous life. ♦

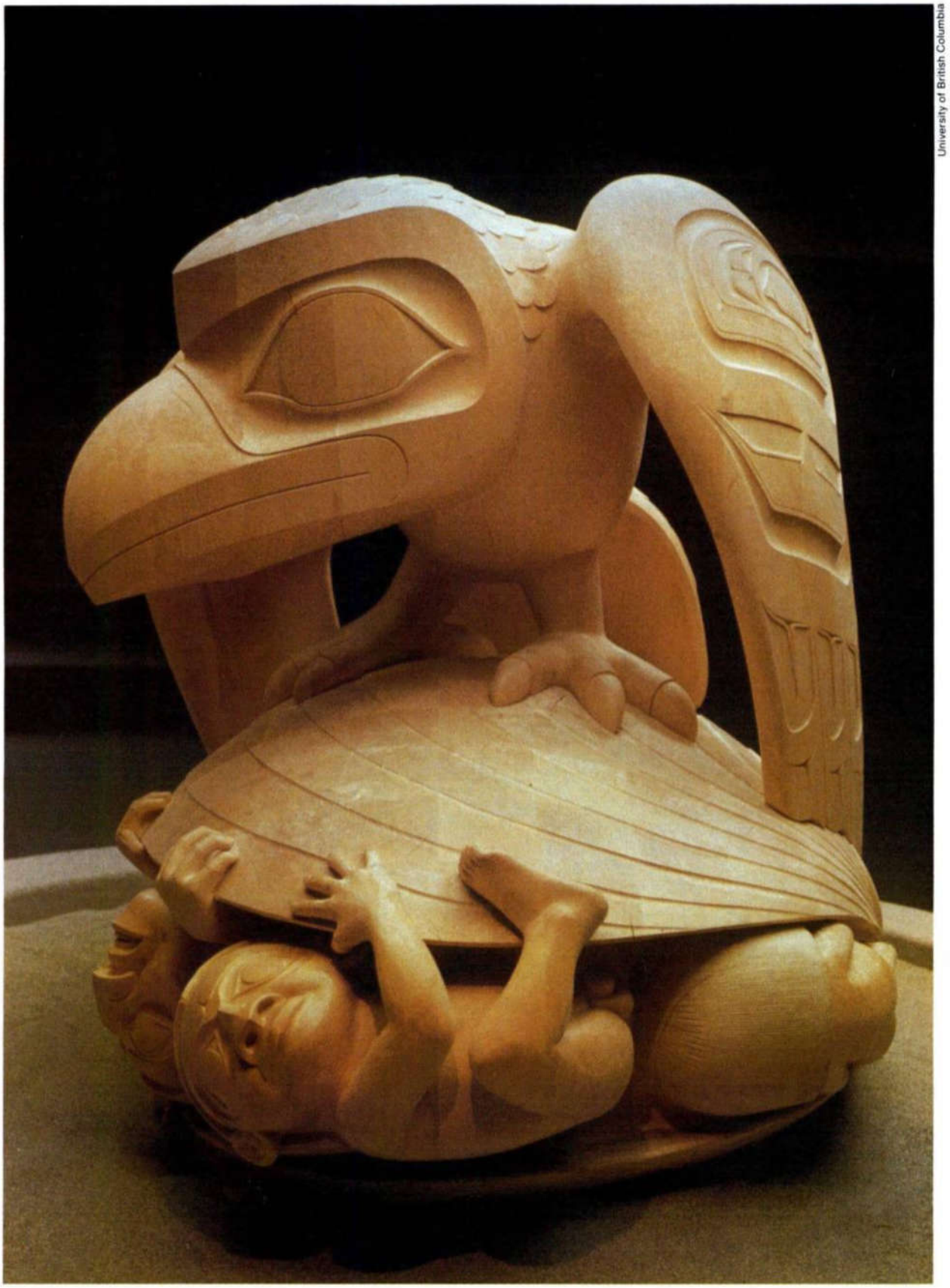
Gerard Chapman, a retired chemist of Stockbridge, Mass., writes a history column for The Berkshire Eagle newspaper in Pittsfield, Mass.

University of British Columbia

NEW DAWN AT SKIDEGATE

Bill Reid and the Haida

By Max Wyman



University of British Columbia

A century ago, imposing cedar long-houses stood beside the pebble beach at the village of Skidegate, in the Queen Charlotte Islands, their totem poles keeping sleepless watch across the broad bay. Today, the village of Skidegate is a collection of modest modern buildings that straggle along the strand. The old poles are gone — many of them chopped down by Christian missionaries who considered them heathen, others toppled by the decay and neglect that followed the arrival of the white man.

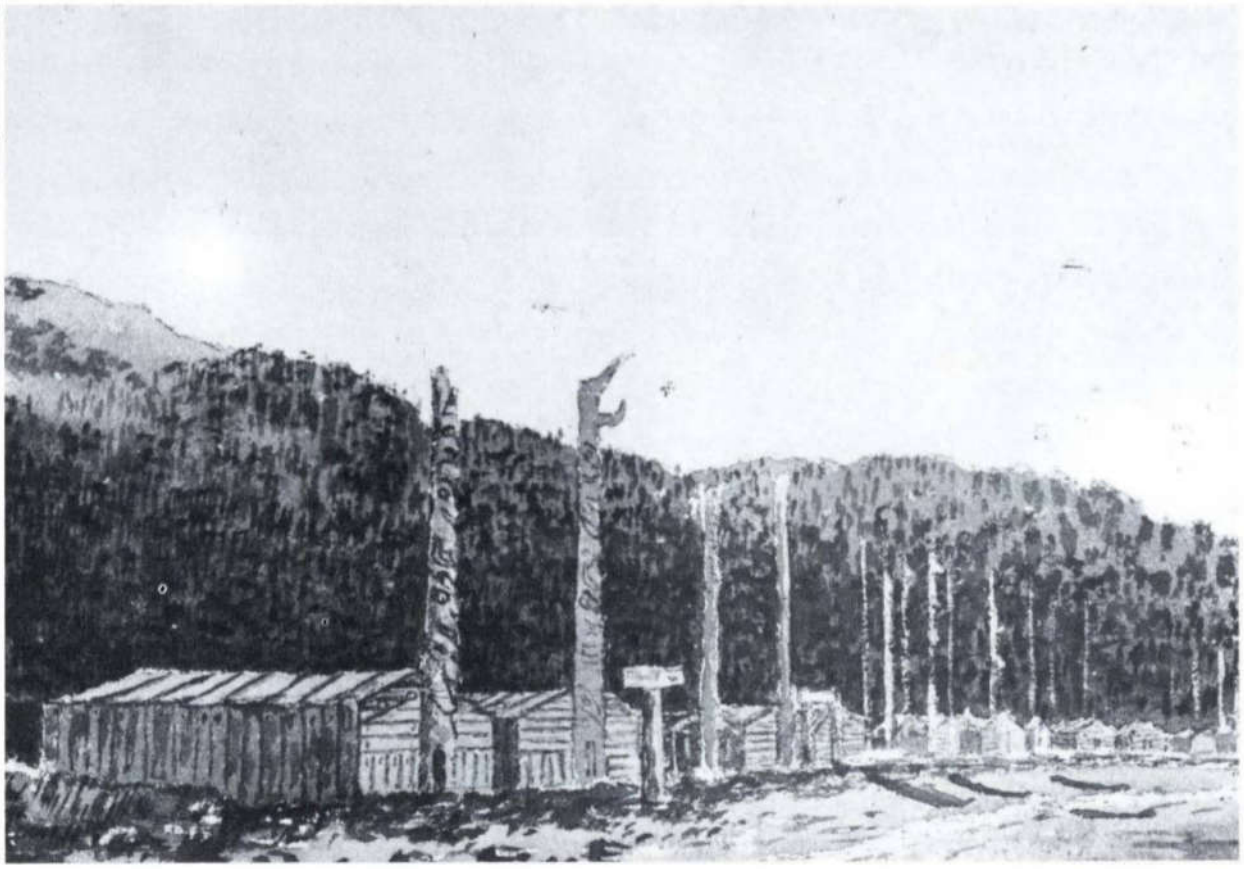
But there are signs at Skidegate these days of a fresh assertion of the strength and dignity of the ancient Haida culture. At the centre of the beach stands the cedar-beamed long-house, built in 1978 as both band office and general village meeting-place. On its ocean side stands a 40-foot totem pole designed by the celebrated Vancouver carver Bill Reid. And one sunny morning in September 1985 the entire population of the village and many neighbouring chiefs gathered at a nearby bay to celebrate the ceremonial "first cut" in the carving of a 50-foot canoe, the first full-sized ocean-going vessel to be carved on the Pacific Coast for an estimated 60 to 70 years.

The financing for the project has come entirely from outside the community. The canoe was scheduled to be paddled under the bridges of Vancouver and into False Creek for the opening ceremonies of Expo '86 at the beginning of May, and the financial sponsor, the Bank of British Columbia, will own it outright. But there was no denying the impressive and touching sense of community celebration that marked the occasion. Traditional button blankets were worn by the band elders as they sat by the newly-built carving shed and waited for the symbolic first stroke of the adze on the massive red-cedar trunk that lay trimmed and straight in the sun. Children played on the beach. Dogs fought. The fragrance of barbecued salmon filled the air.

Soon, a small canoe rounded a distant point and slid slowly closer across the glinting silver sea, bringing ashore members of the team that was to undertake, under Bill Reid's direction, the carving of the canoe. As the vessel breasted the beach, carver Gary Edenshaw, member of another famous carving family, leaped ashore and, accompanied by drumming and chanting, ran to the carving area bearing the ceremonial new

Below: Skidegate in 1876, from a watercolour by Lord Dufferin. The illustration on page 48 is Bear by Bill Reid. The Raven and the First Men by Bill Reid is on page 49.

Public Archives of Canada



"I never believed in this so-called renaissance of Northwest Coast Indian culture . . . I did what I did because I enjoyed doing it."

— Bill Reid

adze. Reid, the waiting chiefs and the Bank of B.C.'s chairman, Edgar Kaiser Jr., each made an incision in the massive trunk, and the ceremony turned into a Haida feast, complete with traditional dances and songs and much laughter and congratulation.

At one point, one of the elders stared out to sea and recalled the old sea-going canoes, 70 and 80 feet long, that he used to play on as a boy along the beach at Skidegate. Another spoke movingly of the near-lost lore and craft of canoe-carving. Miles Richardson, president of the Council of the Haida Nations, a man who had shared with me on the flight to Skidegate some of his concerns about the white society's continuing lack of understanding of his people, spoke of the ultimate significance of the event — not only as a point of revival of a great Haida creative tradition, but also, in its involvement of a major institution from the outside world, "a new initiative for us all as human beings to understand each other." And everyone spoke affectionately and respectfully of the contribution that Reid was making to the revival of the craft of carving.

Under white rule, the Haida population of the Queen Charlottes dwindled from a peak of 8,000 to a low of less than 600 in 1920. As the population declined, so did the culture. Knowledge and understanding of traditional artforms — artforms that permeated every level and activity of the Haida society, functioning both as individual crest art and as a visible rendering of the supernatural and mythic world — virtually died out. Its revival dates from the late 1960s, and many attribute it largely to Bill Reid. The French social anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, for instance, credits Reid with having "tended and revived a flame that was close to dying . . . thanks to Bill Reid, the art of the Indians of the Pacific Coast makes its entry upon the great stages of the world."

But Reid is a reluctant and self-deprecating saviour. "I never believed in this so-called renaissance of Northwest Coast Indian culture, nor that I had any great contribution to make to the artform. I did what I did because I enjoyed doing it." His totem pole at the long-house at Skidegate was intended, he says, not as a symbol of this artistic revival (though that is how it is celebrated each year) but as a monument to past glories. Even the 1978 construction of the long-house, itself hailed as evidence of cultural resurgence, was, in Reid's words, "completely the creation of outsiders. What the band wanted was two mobile homes shoved together — an instant office".

With wit, passion and a courteous conviction, this gentle man whose hands have fashioned some of the greatest artistic masterpieces made on the West Coast in this century argues that it is impossible to divorce the art of the Haida from Haida daily life. The art the people made was an expression of the entire culture, and to consider today's manifestations of that tradition in isolation is to ignore the fact that, artistic revival or no, Haida society itself is far from undergoing any kind of rebirth. Unemployment is over 60 per cent, the school drop-out rate is almost 100 per cent, the suicide rate is high, alcoholism and violence are rampant. The level of poverty, says Reid, is as bad as in any Third World country. "Behind the art of the Haida," says Reid, "lay a completely integrated way of life, and it is *that* that people should be working to reconstitute."

His scorn gives the words of Levi-Strauss a sombre ring. It is hard to ignore his clear plea for social justice as well as artistic regard. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear: through Bill Reid's example, an almost extinct artform that was unique in the world has been revived. Thanks to him, the arts of Westcoast Indian carving and jewellery design thrive again; thanks to him, the Haida canoe will sail once more, and a new generation will exercise an ancient craft.

But there is more even than that. Reid and some of those who have come after him have begun to evolve new approaches to their work — careful innovations in the areas of techniques and subtle modifications to such design elements as proportion and symmetry — that ensure that what they have revived is no fossil culture, but a living artform that remains faithful to its origins yet provides valid expression for contemporary creators. The decorative tradition is infused with a modern expressiveness. He has freed the form.

It is only within the past decade that Bill Reid has come into the full sunshine of broad public regard that his lifework has long merited. The University of B.C. Museum of Anthropology, which houses a number of his major works, principal among them *The Raven and the First Men,* has recently established an archive in his name. In July, to commemorate the centennial

of the city of Vancouver and Expo '86, an extensive retrospective of Reid's work in gold, silver, wood, bone and ivory will open at the museum, underwritten by a variety of B.C. businesses.

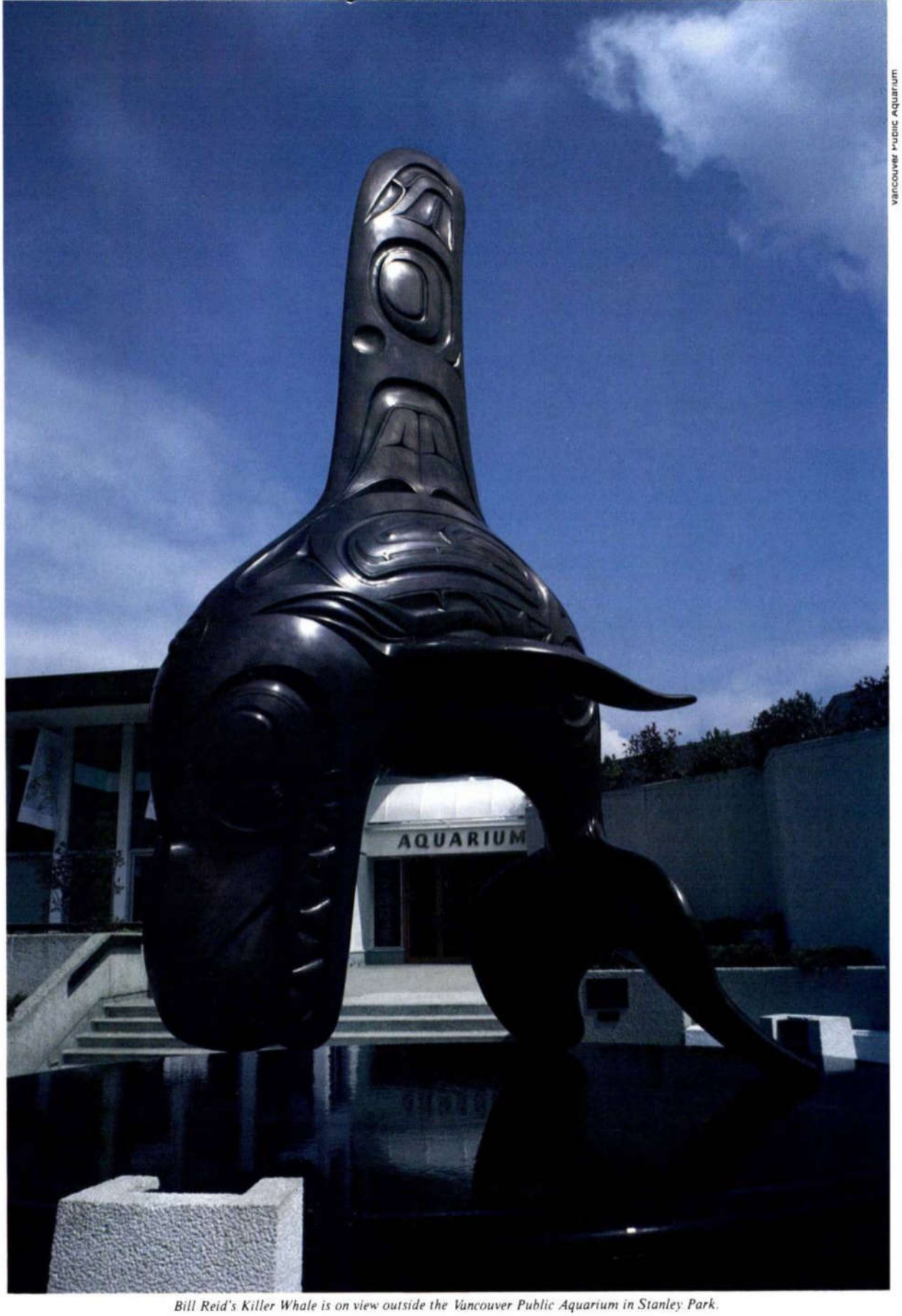
He was born in Victoria, B.C., son of an American father and a Haida (from Skidegate) mother, and had what he describes as a conventional Caucasian American upbringing. The bracelets worn by his mother and his aunt marked the extent of his knowledge of Haida art when he was a youth, though when he was in his 20s he spent a week watching his maternal grandfather carve in silver. He watched in silence; his grandfather (Charles Gladstone, once an apprentice to the last of the great 19th-century Haida carvers, Chief Edenshaw) spoke no English, and Reid has never learned Haida.

Initially, he had no intention of becoming a carver himself. If he hadn't wanted to make a bracelet like his mother's, he might have spent his life languishing in the dungeon of a staff announcer's booth at CBC Toronto — and traditional Indian art might still be languishing in the slough of neglect into which it had slipped (or been pushed) in the early part of this century.

Max Wyman

Max Wyman

Below: Elders sit beside the carving shed, the newly cut canoe log in the foreground. Right: Bill Reid (extreme left) with Edgar Kaiser, Skidegate Chief Dempsey Collinson and others at the ceremony.



Vancouver Public Aquarium

Bill Reid's Killer Whale is on view outside the Vancouver Public Aquarium in Stanley Park.

His first plans were to make a career in radio — he spoke well, and he fancied becoming a great soap salesman like those on the U.S. networks — and he soon found work (this was 1939) in Victoria. In 1948 he joined the CBC, and bounced his way from station to station across the country, eventually reaching Toronto, where he quickly discovered that lasting radio fame was not for him.

He "stumbled into" jewellery-making one September afternoon. A notice-board announced the start of a gold and silversmithing course at Ryerson Polytechnic. He signed up, absorbed the European techniques of working in silver and gold, and eventually decided he would like to make a bracelet like his mother's. He returned to B.C. to find out how it was done — and, in his words, "became enamored of the form."

It was the perfect marriage between established tradition and new technique. Articulate and intelligent, his feet firmly planted in two cultures, he soon gravitated to the centre of the Coast Indian art world; many of the techniques he learned in Toronto are still in daily use in the coastal carving community.

He also became the darling of the curators, the academics and the anthropologists. In 1957 the provincial museum invited him to carve a copy of a Haida totem pole. He collaborated with Kwakiutl artist Douglas Cranmer in the re-creation of part of a Haida village at the University of B.C. He contributed a gold casket topped by an eagle to the Canadian pavilion at Expo '67. In 1978 he made the totem for the new long-house at Skidegate. He spent three years (with three other carvers as helpers) carving *The Raven and the First Men* for the Museum of Anthropology from a laminated four-and-a-half ton block of 106 pieces of yellow cedar. In 1984, his 14-foot bronze killer whale for the Vancouver Aquarium was unveiled.

His most recent endeavour has been the creation of a series of three canoes, begun in 1984 as a project for Expo '86. The first, a half-scale replica of a 16-foot canoe at the Museum of Man in Ottawa, was effectively a model for the subsequent projects — a 24-foot vessel that was launched at Vancouver's Asia-Pacific Festival in June 1985 (this was the canoe that brought the adze to the "first cut" ceremony), and the ocean-going 50-footer under construction at Skidegate. The costs of the third canoe were excised from the Expo budget in a round of cost-cutting measures in the summer of 1985, which is when the project was picked up by the Bank of British Columbia, and former Expo entertainment director Christopher Wootten, instigator of the Expo canoe project, was hired to coordinate the carving.

It is a project that promises to leave a lasting legacy. To make the canoe a reality, it was necessary to establish a carving shed at Skidegate, hire and train carvers, and equip them with the necessary tools, all of which will be left behind when the project has been completed. In effect, Bill Reid was forced to perform yet another last-minute rescue operation on a dying Haida artform.

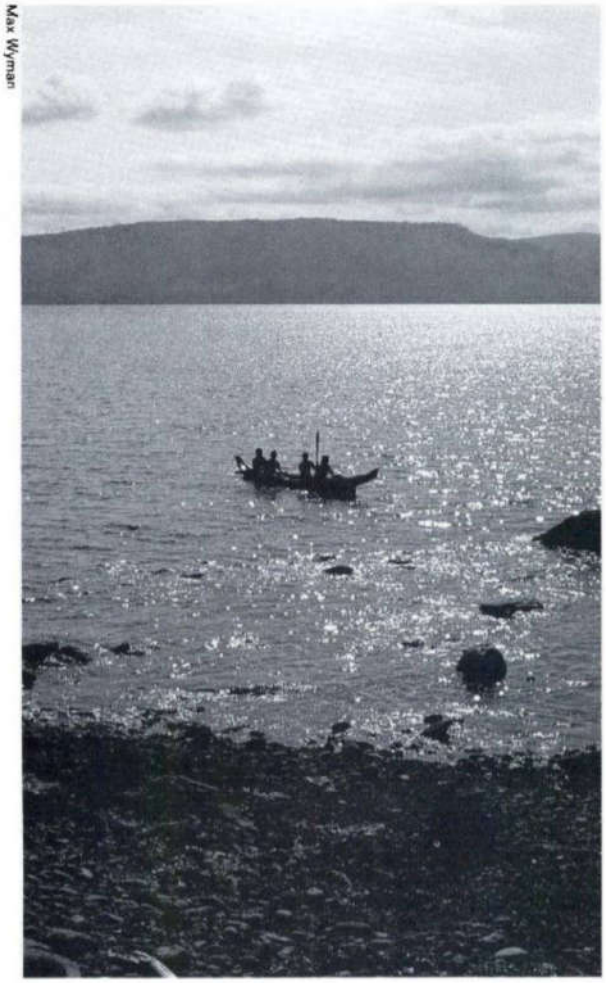
Max Wyman

The new totem and long-house at Skidegate.

He has also consistently advanced our understanding of it. It was Seattle anthropologist and curator Bill Holm who provided, in his 1965 MA thesis, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form,* the vocabulary now accepted as standard terminology for the elements of classic Northwest Coast design — ovoid, U-form and formline (the widening and narrowing tapered line that forms the basis of the design).

But it is Bill Reid who has taken that linguistic formality one step further, arguing that the canoe itself was the source of those basic designs, designs whose strength, vitality and feeling appear as a common theme throughout all the artistic endeavors of the Haida.

The link only became apparent to him, he told me, when he began to carve the current series of canoes. "Inevitably," he said, "people who spent as much time as the Haida spent working on canoes would take the lines that were familiar to them when they moved to other creative activity." And he took my notebook and



Max Wyman

The canoe bearing the ceremonial adze approaches Skidegate.

pen, and with a few deft strokes demonstrated how all the basic forms derive from a few canoe shapes — a side-on view, an overhead view, a sectional view. Combined, they produce the representational designs familiar throughout Westcoast art.

Bill Reid remains, for all his honours, a modest man. "If I hadn't had the Haida tradition to fall back on," he once told me, "I could have done some decent jewellery and sculpture. But I think the dialogue between me as an urban 20th-century product of this particular age and this 19th-century thing has produced some quite remarkable pieces. What they symbolize, or what their significance is, I don't know. They're just nice things — and that's all they have to be."

According to the mythology of Haida Indian woodcarving, the team of carvers employed to make a new canoe must remain celibate for the duration of the enterprise, which can take many months. If celibacy is broken, the log from which the canoe is emerging will crack, and all the work will have been in vain.

This is not the only traditional restriction imposed on the makers of canoes. There is also the matter of the steaming. When the keel has been shaped and the log is sufficiently hollowed, it is filled with water and hot rocks, and covered with canvas. The steam renders the tree-trunk as malleable as macaroni, allowing the carvers to insert spreaders that form the dimensions of the canoe. It is a crucial moment in the canoe's construction. No woman is allowed to be present, and no one on the carving team is allowed to stand at either end of the log, for fear that any evil spirits within them might incite the log to crack open.

"What they symbolize,
or what their significance is,
I don't know.
They're just nice things
— and that's all they have to be . . ."

The team that worked through the past winter on Bill Reid's new 50-foot Haida canoe at Skidegate clearly paid scrupulous attention to these conditions. By the end of the year, the successful creation of the canoe had become, in Reid's words, "a holy mission". The steaming took place at the end of February, without incident. Reid, project co-ordinator Christopher Wootten, the carving team and the villagers of Skidegate breathed a united sigh of relief at the news. The canoe would be ready. The worst was over. ♦

Max Wyman is a Vancouver author and critic. He has published a history of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

A gold brooch fashioned by Bill Reid, 1959.

In Peril on the Sea

By Philip Goldring

ARCTIC WHALERS ICY SEAS
By W. Gillies Ross. Irwin, Toronto, 1985. 288 pp., illus. $34.95.

Author W. Gillies Ross examines whale ribs on Blacklead Island, Cumberland Sound. Illustration from Arctic Whalers Icy Seas.

Whalers did for Canada's Arctic what fur-traders had already done for the sub-Arctic — opened it to European curiosity and trade, changing in the process the existing balance between native population and renewable resources. The great era of bowhead whaling in Davis Strait was the century after the Napoleonic Wars; it is captured here by W. Gillies Ross with a grace, flair and erudition that are rarely combined in Canadian historical writing.

Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas presents 14 first-hand narratives of life on the whaling grounds, and one account of a young Inuk's winter "among the native inhabitants of Scotland." Seven narratives date from the most productive (and most dangerous) seasons of the Davis Straits whale fishery, 1820 to 1840; five draw upon the middle years of the century, when the new whaling-ground of Cumberland Sound gave the industry a new lease on life. The other three texts date from after 1870, when *balaena mysticetus* was threatened with an extinction which the species has narrowly avoided, the whaling fleets were shrinking rapidly, and even shore stations were hard pressed to turn a profit. The volume opens with a young surgeon's description of navigating through ice, and closes, appropriately, with ethnographic notes on the Inuit written in Cumberland Sound by a middle-aged Scotsman, living out of touch with the rest of the world during the 1914-1918 war. Four of Ross's narrators are English, two American and nine Scottish — a fair balance to represent the industry as a whole; seven narratives were written by British ships' surgeons, seven by seamen and one by a gentleman-adventurer.

Ross has linked these texts with description and analysis; some of it summarizes omitted passages but much of it embodies the results of his own reading and reflection on the whaling industry, a distillation of his own writing on whaling over the past 15 years. There are no narratives from Hudson Bay or Hudson Strait, the subject of another important book by Ross in 1975: this new work, ten years later, is a very different book, less didactic but equally authoritative.

The difference between *Arctic Whalers* and almost any other recent book on Canadian history is the harmonious marriage of historic texts, smooth commentary, and illustrations of striking documentary interest and aesthetic appeal. Most impressive are sketches done by New Bedford whaling master Timothy Packard during the 1860s, and the work of British photographers, many of them anonymous, who accom-

panied the Dundee steam whalers in the last decades of the 19th century. With painstaking care Ross and his editors have matched illustration to narrative throughout the book, more than 150 engravings, photographs and period maps appearing at apposite points. In the one case that is notoriously difficult to illustrate, the intricate sequence of activities involved in flensing and making-off, Ross himself has produced cut-away drawings of a whalers' decks to show the operation and each seaman's role in it.

For 160 years studies of the Arctic whaling industry have been dominated by one work, William Scoresby's two-volume *Account of the arctic regions with a history and description of the northern whale-fishery.* It is, as Ross says "still a standard reference, as well as fascinating reading". A few other authoritative first-hand accounts appeared in the 19th century, and the reader can turn to them, piecemeal, to bring Scoresby's story more nearly up to date. Ross lists these classics in a short bibliography, but has chosen none of them for *Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas*; only six of his narratives have previously been published, none since 1875. From the great wealth of unpublished, or obscurely-published sources he has picked the passages which most succinctly but comprehensively illustrate all the processes, dangers and peculiarities of the fishery.

The diversity of authors challenged Ross to provide a consistently-readable text. He has done this by silently smoothing out irregularities of spelling and (perhaps) syntax throughout, and by omitting tedious or repetitive passages. Each narrator has a distinct character: this reviewer's favourites were the God-fearing mariner William Elder of Kirkaldy, facing death almost daily as the *Viewforth* drifted in the pack ice; the boatsteerer Albert Whitehouse who described outlandish events in a matter-of-fact demotic prose; the American seaman John Sullivan, survivor of a small party of deserters who eventually reached Newfoundland, their numbers reduced by privation, murder and cannibalism; and Walter Livingstone-Learmonth, who accompanied the *Maud* of Dundee on her 1889 cruise, virtually as a tourist. He was a highly competent photographer, and a bloodthirsty hunter of game of all sizes. To be candid, the seven surgeons' narratives are *not* the most entertaining parts of the book, though they are by far the most informative.

Ross is no polemicist: he deals dispassionately with emotional issues. On the whaling industry itself his most pointed judgement comes in closing: "At no point in history can there by any excuse, on a finite earth, for the unthinking destruction if its renewable resources". On the treatment of seamen he notes, "that excellent Victorian commodity — resolve . . . was ever so much cheaper than provisions and clothing". As for the natives, "On the West [i.e. Baffin] Side the Eskimos were totally unhindered (and unprotected) by colonial authority". On these issues much of Ross's material may evoke strong emotions; he leaves his readers to react as they choose.

Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas is that rarest of books, a substantial contribution to knowledge that should be enjoyed by a wide range of readers. For the scholar and the student this work collects some inaccessible texts, superb documentary art and photography, and expertly-written commentary. The most marketable commodities in actic books today are first-hand narratives of northern life, and "coffee-table" books. Ross has managed to blend a sound piece of historical writing with these two saleable genres, avoiding virtually all the pitfalls of such a hybrid approach. There has not been a better book on arctic whaling since Scoresby's work in 1820; and for a broad audience, it may be the best book on Eastern Arctic history ever published. *Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas* will inform scholars and entertain a general audience, and should be admired and enjoyed by both.

Philip Goldring, an historian with Parks Canada, Ottawa, contributed an article on Arctic whaling to the January/February 1986 issue of The Beaver.

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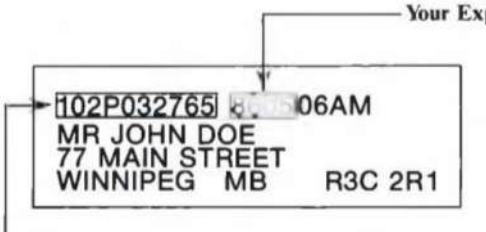
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Humanity in Adversity

By David Watmough

KENOJUAK

By Jean Blodgett. Firefly Books, Toronto, 1985. 252 pp., illus. $49.95.

This autobiography and compendium of drawings, prints and other media by the Inuit artist, Kenojuak, is far more than it might ostensibly seem. It is no nice record of a native lady from the Canadian Arctic who has made an attractive and substantial contribution to the world of Canadian visual arts. Far from it. The cultural contours which have gone to shape this remarkable woman are as distant from ours in the south of our vast land as are the ideas about art, its nature and purpose, even its priority, are from our romantic and urban ones.

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John Reeves

Kenojuak

In this lavishly illustrated art book we are presented with a woman born on Baffin Island in 1927 who has seen a whole way of life disappear. But while Kenojuak laments about the passage of many of the structures obtaining during her infancy and girlhood, she never for a moment glosses over the bleaker realities which were the savage concomitants of Inuit existence in the harsh northlands. Most assuredly, this book has excellent illustrations, both black and white, and coloured, and some fascinating photographs of the artist and her family and people — yet the human facts revealed within the pages of print are often ugly.

On a bitter winter's day in 1933 on Mansel Island she witnessed the murder of her own father. The motive was Inuit justice which sought to maintain (above all else) the harmony and stability of the group. Here, in her own words — or as told to Patricia Ryan in the device used throughout the autobiographic section of the volume — is a description of that event.

"Three men had waited to murder my father. Now they proceeded to tie rocks to his neck, wrists, and ankles. Heavily weighted, his body was tossed into the sea. All his possessions were thrown after him. Some of his dogs were shot, although several managed to escape. Later, people said that those few dogs, which sought refuge in the hills, never again ventured near the campsite."

Over and over again we are treated to the savage refrain of the ravages wrought by tuberculosis on her relatives and tribespeople. Indeed, she herself spent time in a sanatorium where she slowly, and in lonely isolation, miraculously recovered from her damaged lungs.

Even further removed, perhaps, from our current and cliched sensibilities is her honest and persistent depiction of flesh-eating and fur-clad mankind in a harsh subsistence environment. No sanitizing anaesthetic from an invisible slaughterhouse operation for Kenojuak and her kin. What you killed was what you ate and what you killed was what you wore. So if you are looking for a glossy coffee-table token of jolly, grinning Inuit snug in furs and larking in the snow, then cast elsewhere. On the other hand, if vivid cameos of humanity in adversity, plus an unusual artistic harvest (splendidly recorded) appeal to you, then this volume will give pleasure to look at, provide a healthy corrective to sentimentality and perhaps pride that we share a country with such an indomitable people. Further essays on the art of Kenojuak, her forms of expression and techniques of execution ensure that the volume has also an archival significance and should thus appeal to an unusually broad segment of the general public.

David Watmough is a Vancouver author and art critic.

THE PACKET

Letters to and from The Editor

Public Archives of Canada

Loss of the McLellan by W.W. May.

The McLellan: An Eyewitness Account

I greatly enjoyed reading Philip Goldring's article "The last voyage of the *McLellan*" which appeared in the January/February issue of *The Beaver*. It crossed my mind that your readers might be interested in reading a firsthand account of the sinking of the *McLellan* which is not readily available, in that the author was French and his journal has never been published. A typescript of his journal is held in the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute, in Cambridge, England.

The author, Enseigne de vaisseau Emile Frédéric de Bray, an officer in the French Navy, like his unfortunate compatriot Joseph Rene Bellot had volunteered to take part in the British Navy's search for the Franklin expedition. He was seconded to Captain Henry Kellett's ship *Resolute*, one of the five ships comprising Sir Edward Belcher's arctic squadron. De Bray's journal entries concerning the sinking of the *McLellan* read, in translation, as follows:

7 July 1852. Around 4:00 this morning the wind began to freshen from the SE and the ice began moving. The American whaler *McLellan*, which had not cut a dock, was caught between two floes and so badly nipped that she was soon reported leaking in several places. Every ship [of the British squadron] sent a work-party aboard her; after the hold had been partly cleared and after the pumps had been manned for two hours, they managed to stop these leaks. Carpenters and caulkers set to work and by 10:00 p.m., while still not in perfect condition, the ship was at least seaworthy again.

8 July 1852. The wind is still blowing with extreme violence, and this morning the American whaler had no chance of escaping. The ice pressure was so great that she was lifted by the two floes which have come together; her stern was pushed against *North Star's* bow, having first broken the outer end of the bow-sprit of another whaler, *Alexander*. Her crew were obliged to cut away her mizzen mast to prevent it fouling *North Star's* bowsprit. Lying on her side, her hull cracking throughout, the poor ship soon filled and was clearly doomed.

Throughout the day our men were engaged in saving from *McLellan* everything that could be of use, her captain having consented to this. Afraid that the crews of the other whalers would come to loot her in their usual fashion Sir Edward ordered sentries posted around the ship.

This evening the ice is moving in every direction and all the whalers are in a very hazardous position, especially the brig *Orion*, which is making 2 feet of water per hour, despite all our efforts to free her. *Truelove* is also very badly placed, and one can only hope that the wind does not strengthen, since it is almost inevitable that one of the whalers will be wrecked. As for all our ships they are perfectly secure, even although the sides of our ice docks have been broken, since we always have the option of cutting away more ice astern and thus retreating from the moving ice.

The American captain and the crews of two [of *McLellan's*] whaleboats have taken refuge aboard *Truelove*; as for the other men, who include Russians, Portuguese and Irish, they have gone aboard various others of the whalers and have signed on. *Alexander*, which is probably experiencing the greatest pressure, is resisting it totally and is making no water. *North Star* is no longer moving and will probably get away with the loss of a cathead and the outer end of her jib boom.

This evening a bear was prowling near the ships; along with the doctor I set off in pursuit immediately but some of the whalemen had spotted it and began chasing it. The animal took fright and ran off at top speed before we could get a shot.

9 July 1852. The wind has slackened but is still blowing from the SW and there is no sign of any opening in the ice. We are continuing to unload *McLellan*, and *North Star* is taking everything we can get out of her.

From De Bray's description of the events on the 8th it is possible to answer the question posed in your caption to the reproduction of May's painting on p.39. The *McLellan* (minus her mizzen mast, as described by De Bray) is on the extreme right. The two ships to the left of her, and with their bows close against her starboard quarter are *North Star* and *Alexander*, both of whose bowsprits she fouled.

Apart from solving this little puzzle, De Bray's account adds some additional insights (such as his remarks on the ethnic composition of the crew of this American whaleman) which are not to be found in the two published accounts of this incident (by Sir Edward Belcher and G. F. McDougall, sailing master aboard *Resolute*) or in the journals of British officers such as McClintock or May.

William Barr
Professor and Head,
Department of Geography,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon.

Goldring's Postcript

Professor Barr has correctly diagnosed my difficulty in identifying the *McLellan* in W.W. May's sketch. ("The Last Voyage of the McLellan", *The Beaver*, Jan./Feb. 1986). The New England whaler was either a ship or a barque according to conflicting contemporary reports, but in either case she must have had three masts. The vessel in most obvious distress in May's sketch has only two. De Bray's account solves that puzzle, as well as making it clear that the *McLellan* by 1852 was carrying the normal mixed crew of a New England whaler, not the English-dominated crew of her earlier voyages.

Curiously, since "The Last Voyage" went to press another account has surfaced which confirms some of De Bray's comments. The Public Archives of Canada recently acquired an important document relating to the Belcher expedition, the private journal of William T. Mumford (MG24 H 80). This is a young carpenter's account of the voyage of *HMS Resolute* (1852-54), and includes several references to the *McLellan*. Mumford corroborates De Bray: "her mizzen-mast was cut away to save the North Stars bowsprit".

But this is not the only anomaly in May's sketch, or in two other drawings of the same scene. (One of the others, by G.F. McDougall of *HMS Resolute* appeared in *The Beaver*, Spring 1967, p. 25); an anonymous version is reproduced in W.G. Ross's *Arctic Whaler Icy Seas* p. 191). The nipped vessel is not an obvious threat to the *Alexander* and *HMS North Star*, being tilted away from them; and she has the painted mock-gunports of a British whaler. Assuming that she is none the less the *McLellan*, this suggests her American owners had bought her in 1846 from the declining British whaling fleet, ready-strengthened for ice navigation, and not from the American merchant fleet.

Mumford's journal raises an intriguing possibility that perhaps not all of the *McLellan* is irretrievably lost. Belcher took seriously the Royal Navy's ownership of the wreck, for on 13 August 1852 and 19 July 1854 Mumford recorded reuse of parts of the *McLellan* at Beechey Island. On the former occasion he and his fellow carpenters sawed one of the whaler's masts into lumber to build a house on Beechey Island, and nearly two years later her galley was incorporated into a cook-house being built at the same place. Beechey Island still has the remains of buildings erected at about this time.

Philip Goldring,
Ottawa.

CORRECTION

R.H. Cockburn writes that the colour photograph of Ernest C. Oberholtzer in his article Voyage to Nutheltin (The Beaver, January/February 1986, page 25) should have been credited to Robert Hilke.

"Bayeskimo"

The January/February 1986 issue of *'The Beaver'* arrived recently and I was very surprised to read therein my letter to you of January 1985 under the Heading "The Reindeer Project".

Might I respectfully point out however that a serious error has crept into the printing of my letter. In the letter as printed "Baychimo" is twice mentioned on page 62 when in fact it should read "Bayeskimo" and reference to my original letter will reveal that fact which for the sake of historical accuracy needs to be rectified.

When "Baychimo" returned to Hull, England, after completion of the 1921 voyage the Hudson's Bay Company, for some quite unknown reason, decided that she was to be laid up and to that end we took her to the river Dart in southern England, where she lay in idle retirement until she was recommissioned in 1923 to undertake the establishment of trading posts in Kamschatka.

In conclusion may I congratulate you for having introduced "The Packet" and to thank you for having used my letter as a starter. I trust I shall be able to add further contributions.

Captain F.W. Berchem,
Saltcoats, Ayrshire,
Scotland

Cover Story

After the union of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1831, the former took over the posts of "The Master Pedlars" in the Columbia (Oregon Territory) and New Caledonia (British Columbia) districts where the two companies had not previously been in competition. George Simpson, newly appointed Governor of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, soon found that these were expensive and unprofitable establishments, due principally to difficult routes of transportation.

The recognized route to New Caledonia was by way of the Churchill River, Athabasca River, and north to Lesser Slave Lake, then by the Peace and Parsnip Rivers, and by horses to Fort George and the posts on the Fraser River. The principal article of trade was leather.

When Governor Simpson made his journey to the Pacific in 1824 he went with the Columbia Brigade up the Churchill to Ile a la Crosse and thence up the Beaver River and across the height of land to Lac la Biche and from there he pursued his way down Riviere la Biche to its junction with the Athabasca whence he followed the latter river to Henry's House. From there, by pack horse, Simpson crossed the Athabasca Pass, by the Committee's Punch Bowl to Boat Encampment at the juncture of the Canoe and Columbia Rivers and down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver.

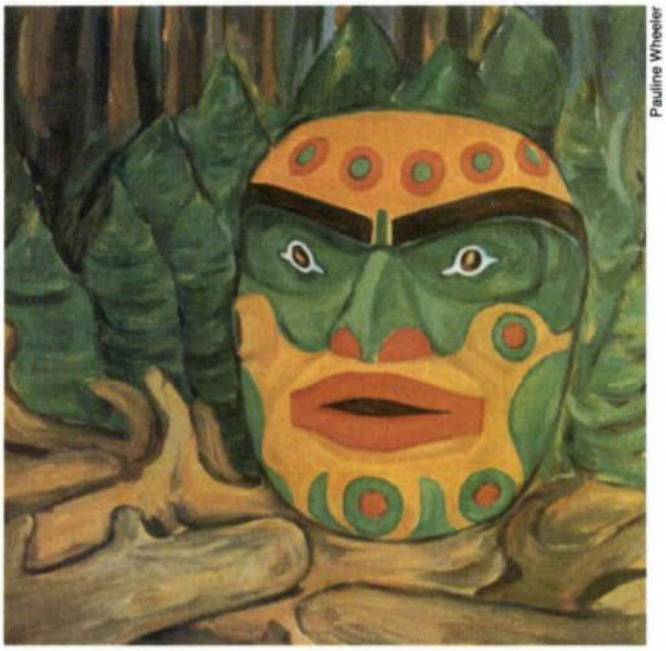
While on this journey Simpson planned changing the route of the brigades for New Caledonia from the Churchill to the Saskatchewan because of the ease of the waterway and the abundance of game. He learned from the natives at Boat Encampment that it was possible to go up the Canoe River in half sized canoes, portage to the headwaters of the Fraser River and down to Fort George in about ten days. This convinced Simpson "that great advantages would arise from changing the route now pursued by the New Caledonia Brigade, which is the most tedious, harrassing and expensive transport in the Indian Country". He then planned that the Brigade, instead of following the Peace River route to the Pacific should accompany the Columbia express along the Saskatchewan and ". . . from Edmonton cross over to Fort Assiniboine . . . then proceed . . . to Henry's House in the mountains . . . thence by horses to Yellowhead Lake . . . thence by Land or Water to the head of Fraser's River . . . thence by a fine bold stream to the different posts".

Simpson instructed Chief Trader James McMillan, in charge of Fort Assiniboine, to survey the track between Jasper House and the head of the Fraser River. McMillan carried out his orders in the fall of 1825 and reported his route to Wm. Conolly of Fort St. James. "The Country I passed through is not as bad as I expected, and with very little trouble horses will pass their loads with ease . . ." His route was to Henry House and then west through what is now the Yellowhead Pass, to Yellowhead Lake and Moose Lake and west along the banks of "The River" to Tête Jaune Cache on the Fraser River.

At the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land held in 1826 it was resolved that the leather for New Caledonia should be sent by that route. This arrangement was carried out that season.

After 1826 the Yellowhead Pass became the recognized route to New Caledonia and the two brigades would travel to the juncture of the Athabasca and Miette Rivers, the Columbia express proceeding southward over the Athabasca Pass.

"The Parting of the Brigades" was painted for the Company by Walter J. Phillips, R.C.A.



Pauline Wheeler

Komokwa, Ruler of the Sea

The August/September issue of *The Beaver*, to be published in midsummer, will feature a series of remarkable paintings by Canadian artist Pauline Wheeler depicting the artist's interpretation of Pacific Coast Indian masks. Featured in the same issue is an account, by historian Douglas Cole, of any early visit to Baffin Island by the great anthropologist Franz Boas. Explore Canada's history in these and other memorable features in the August/September issue of *The Beaver.*

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